

tokyo

MARCH 2017

weekender

Japan's number one English language magazine

THE TRAVEL ISSUE



+ SEOUL BEAUTY HAUL

48 HOURS IN KYUSHU'S SAGA

WHERE TO GO GLAMPING IN JAPAN

FOLLOW THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS FROM SOUTH TO NORTH

PLUS: 10 Ways to Enjoy Kagoshima, Narita Daytripping, Jet-Set Accessories, and Around Japan Through Movie Locations

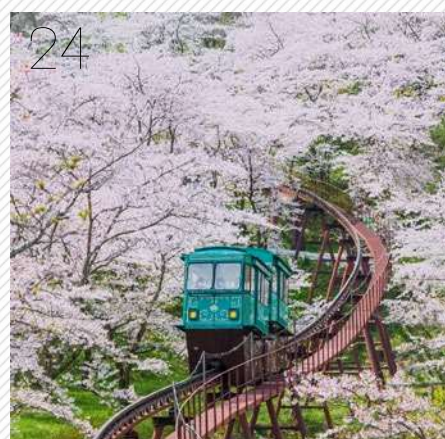
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@mizrama: Alec, do you think you could ever get tired of seeing Mt Fuji?

@bapawn: No, I don't think I could. I've seen it from the beach, from trains and train stations, from far away and from near, and I'm still charmed by it every time. You were just there recently, weren't you?

@mizrama: Yes, I spent a night at Hoshinoya Fuji glamping resort [page 18], where the cabins are shaped to resemble telescopes [see our cover] and they all look directly at the mountain. Actually, I was surprised by how taken I was with Fuji, after years of feeling overexposed to images of it in Japan. The last time I tried to get that close to it, I was on a boat on Lake Kawaguchi, but the entire mountain was covered in cloud. So I was really lucky this time – the sky was perfectly clear. And Fuji was perfectly visible.

@bapawn: I still haven't made up my mind about whether I want to ever climb it, though. There's an expression that I'd come across somewhere, and the gist of it goes, "Only a fool has never climbed Mt Fuji,

and only a fool would ever climb it twice." Not sure where I want to fit into that adage. Where else are we going this month?

@mizrama: Me too. My husband was planning to propose last year at the summit, but every time he suggested we go, it was hailing or storming, so that didn't pan out. She's fickle, Fuji. Other than glamping, we're also going to Saga Prefecture in Kyushu [page 20], Seoul for a quick beauty haul [page 12], and all sorts of picturesque film locations around Japan [page 22]. Have you ever been to Kyushu?

@bapawn: I have! I've been to Nagasaki, Fukuoka, and Kumamoto, but I still haven't gotten to Kagoshima. But part of the fun of this gig is reading about new places and adding to a never-ending list of places in Japan that I need to visit.

@mizrama: Exactly ... with 13 pages dedicated to Kagoshima in this month's issue [page 27] you could almost say that it feels like we've been there...

Annemarie & Alec



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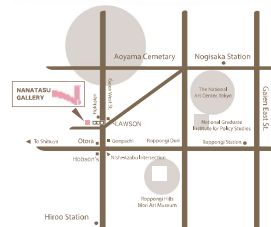


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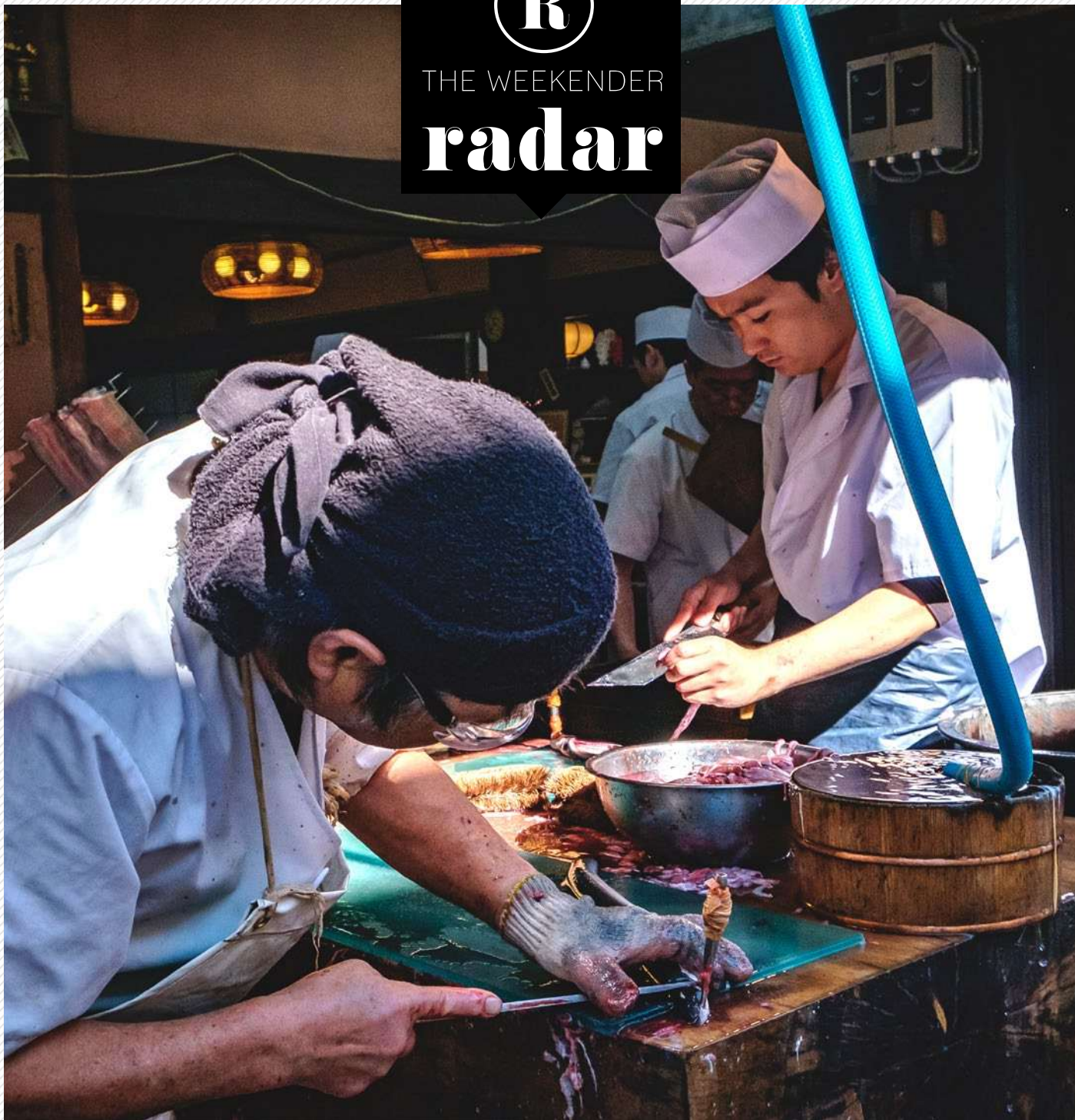
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R

THE WEEKENDER

radar



WHAT'S ON OUR RADAR THIS MONTH...

We're daytripping in Narita (yes, really), imagining we're in Maine while tucking into lobster rolls, and preparing for a beauty shopping trip to Seoul.



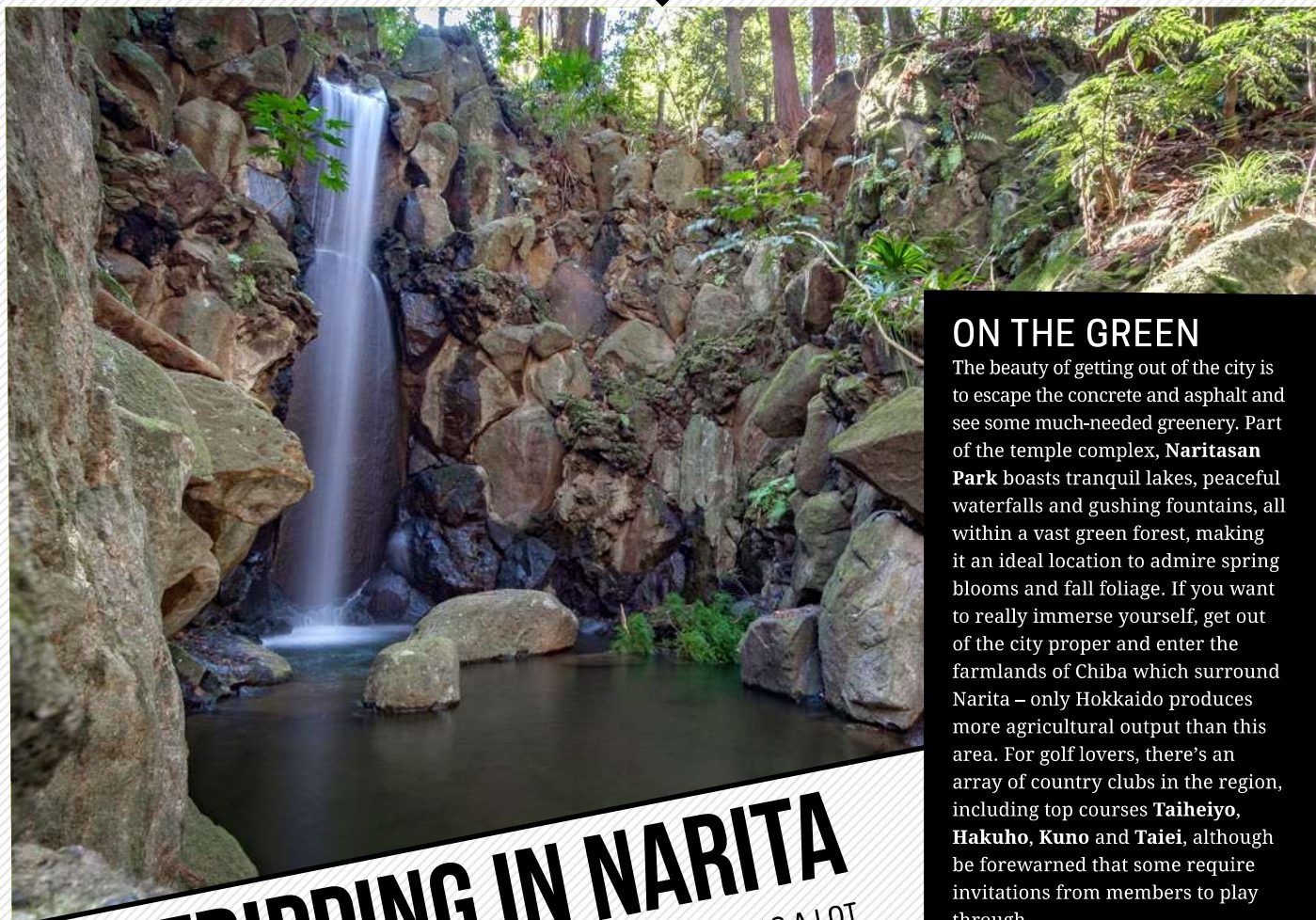
10 STYLE



12 BEAUTY



14 TRENDS



ON THE GREEN

The beauty of getting out of the city is to escape the concrete and asphalt and see some much-needed greenery. Part of the temple complex, **Naritasan Park** boasts tranquil lakes, peaceful waterfalls and gushing fountains, all within a vast green forest, making it an ideal location to admire spring blooms and fall foliage. If you want to really immerse yourself, get out of the city proper and enter the farmlands of Chiba which surround Narita – only Hokkaido produces more agricultural output than this area. For golf lovers, there's an array of country clubs in the region, including top courses **Taiheiyo, Hakuho, Kuno** and **Taiei**, although be forewarned that some require invitations from members to play through.

DAYTRIPPING IN NARITA

MORE THAN AN AIRLINE HUB, THIS CHIBA PREFECTURE TOWN HAS A LOT TO OFFER, WHETHER YOU'RE LOOKING TO KILL TIME ON A LAYOVER OR ESCAPING TOKYO FOR A REGENERATIVE DAY TRIP

Words and photographs by Luca Eandi

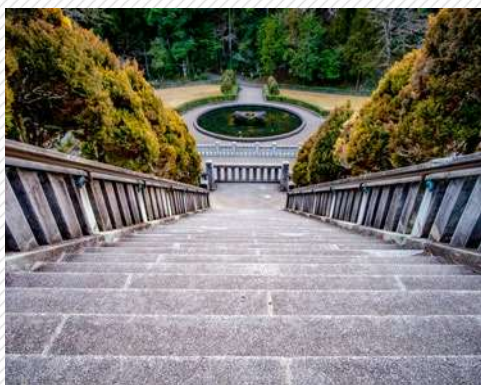
SLIPPERY SLOPE

If you enjoy unagi cooked *kabayaki*-style, you'll be happy to know that it's one of Narita's specialties. Several restaurants on Omotesando, the town's main street, serve up the skewered eel fillets broiled in a sweet soy sauce, and some, most notably **Kawatoyo** or **Surugaya**, do their prepping right on the street so you can be assured you're getting fresh product. Witnessing the butchering of these slippery fish is not for the squeamish or vegetarian-leaning, but the sheer volume of work and the mastery on display is inherently impressive. For additional fish-related fun, you can also hit up the **Narita Wholesale Market** most mornings, where you can attend a tuna auction (by appointment only) or pick up fresh ingredients for a tasty lunch.



TEMPLE OF SWORDS

Founded in the year 940, **Naritasan Shinsoji Temple** is undoubtedly the main sightseeing draw in Narita, and is designated as one of Japan's National Important Cultural Properties. This provincial Shingon Buddhist temple sits in a large complex of impressive buildings and lush grounds. Dedicated to one of five Buddhist Wisdom Kings of the Womb Realm, known in Japan as Fudo Myoo, the temple is adorned with many signs associated with this feisty deity, including fire, rope and massive decorative swords. Highlights of the site include two multi-level pagodas, the Niomon main gate and several open halls – all embellished with bright colors, detailed woodwork and impressive dry-fit joinery.



A GLUT OF OMIYAGE

No weekend getaway can stay secret from nosy coworkers, so you better prepare to have an *omiyage*, or edible souvenir, to present to your officemates on Monday. Luckily, Narita offers many delicious options. With a large store right on Omotesando, **Nagomi** has a wide selection of local confectionery treats, and not just your standard azuki or matcha-flavored sweets. On a hot day, they also serve refreshing *kakigori* shaved ice. **Amataro** is one more shop worth visiting, this one dealing in sweet bean *dorayaki*. Peanuts are another Chiba specialty, and **Kimuraya** has them in heaps. While strolling, surely you'll be drawn to **Abe Shop** by the smell of freshly cooked senbei rice crackers, so be generous and share the goods with your mates.

LEAD THE WAY

The main road in Narita is **Omotesando**. Unlike the other, more famous Omotesando in Tokyo, this one is less glitzy and more quaint. Roughly translating to "path that leads to the shrine," Omotesando does just that, starting from central Narita and ending at Naritasan's main gate. Along the way are more than 150 shops, restaurants and historic buildings. Here you can find traditional Buddhist *daruma* dolls in several shops, as well as several herbal pharmacies offering ancient remedies. If you're looking for crafts, you won't be disappointed. Amongst others, hit up **Kyomasu** for kimonos, textiles and wooden umbrellas, **Sekar Bali Interior** for woven baskets and artisanal home wares, or **Yamada** for handcrafted Japanese steel knives.



◀ SMYTHSON LUGGAGE TAG

While you might hesitate to spend much thought or money on a mere luggage tag, remember that this little accessory does an essential job. Forget about crumpled airline-provided paper tags and step up your game with this chic sky-blue leather number by Smythson. Crafted in Italy, it's embossed with the words "home" and "destination" in gold lettering, and even has an adjustable strap. And if anything, lost luggage has never looked so good...

smythson.com



▶ GUCCI WEEKEND BAG

A good weekend bag is a must-have for short jaunts – to use as an airplane carry-on, for business trips and, well, for journeys of any length in general. The search for the perfect weekender is finally over thanks to this Gucci canvas bag. Trimmed with chocolate-hued leather and printed with the label's signature GG and Chinese tapestry-inspired motifs, this sturdy bag conveniently comes with zipped pockets and a detachable strap. gucci.com

READY, SET, JET

BEFORE YOU HOP ON THAT PLANE, MAKE SURE YOU'RE KITTED OUT WITH THESE STYLISH TRAVEL MUST-HAVES

Compiled by Vivian Morelli



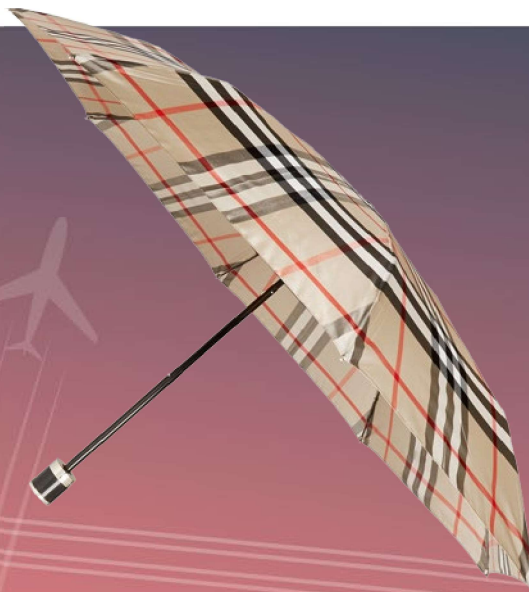
◀ THE ELDER STATESMAN SCARF

Whether you're sitting in economy or business class, a little cashmere goes a long way on any airplane journey. Don't leave home without this luxurious scarf, which doubles as a blanket for long and often chilly plane rides. Made from ultra-soft navy cashmere, this perfect travel companion will keep you warm and cozy inside and outside the plane. elder-statesman.com



➔ BURBERRY UMBRELLA

An umbrella is usually not on top of anyone's packing list, but chances are you'll be needing one at some point, unless you're heading to the desert. Living in Japan has spoiled us with convenience stores on every corner selling umbrellas for unexpected downpours, but if you travel overseas, it may not be as easy. This compact Burberry umbrella is tiny enough to be stored in your bag, and stylish enough to make you hope it will actually rain. burberry.com



➔ TUMI CARRY-ON

Active jet-setters know that a sturdy yet stylish carry-on is an indispensable item. World-renowned for its superior quality and sleek travel accessories, Tumi designs practical and beautiful luggage that can make dreadful treks across airports a lot smoother. This particular aluminum case comes with a TSA lock and interior compartments for extra storage and organization – and the best part is, it weighs barely five kilograms. tumi.co.jp

➔ AESOP JET SET KIT

In the midst of packing for a trip, the issue of toiletries is perhaps the most complicated part: how much can you carry on the plane, and how many plastic bags are needed to avoid potential spills in your luggage are legitimate questions. Thankfully, Aesop, one of our favorite skincare lines, has curated a mini travel kit to ensure you feel fresh and revitalized upon arrival. This kit contains mini airline-approved sizes of Aesop's luxurious shampoo, conditioner, body cleanser and body balm. aesop.com





SEOUL BEAUTY HAUL

Words and illustrations by Bunny Bissoux

Skin Veil Base Cushion (#40), and Two Tone Tint Lip Bar (#06) by Laneige



Perfume de Muse Body Essence (Sparkling Juice), and Inked Cushion Gel Liner by Tony Moly



Flawless Regenerating Eye Cream by Su:m37



Matte Master Eye Palette, and Mini Magnetic Brush Set by Pony Effect



FROM SNAIL MUCIN SHEET MASKS TO SNAKE VENOM SERUM, WE JUST CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF SOUTH KOREA'S INNOVATIVE BEAUTY PRODUCTS. NEXT TIME YOU HEAD TO SEOUL FOR A QUICK SHOPPING TRIP, TAKE ALONG OUR GUIDE TO THE CURRENT BEST BRANDS TO BUY AND PLACES TO SHOP

Although the ingredients list for Korean beauty products can often read like something out of a witch's spell-book, the focus on natural extracts, fermentation and traditional recipes are the keys to success. The only downside of getting into K-Beauty? You might find that your simple cleanse-tone-moisturize regimen ends up feeling pretty meager in comparison to the common Korean 10-step beauty routine.

The K-Beauty Mecca

For the sheer convenience of everything in one place, you must brave the tourists and head to Myeong-dong, the K-beauty mecca where all the mainstream beauty brands have multiple stores on neighboring streets. Nature Republic, Holika Holika, Tony Moly and The Face Shop offer a huge selection of own brand products at very reasonable prices. The sales assistants can be somewhat aggressive in their tactics, but stand your ground and you will be rewarded with an abundance of personal recommendations, special offers and free samples. Many of the stores in this area have bilingual staff and offer tax-free shopping.

As you steer yourself past mountains of sheet mask multipacks, keep an eye out for the "1+1" ("buy one get one free") bargains. Don't underestimate the cheap and cheerful gimmick items like macaron-shaped lip balms, eyeliners that look like school pencils, or panda-themed eye care – the quality is surprisingly high and, besides, these will make an adorable addition to your make-up bag.

Many of the Myeongdong stores are such staples that you will find them all over the city, in train stations and underground shopping malls, even at the airport gate for your last-minute shopping needs. It's also worth venturing into Olive Young (with over 500 locations

across the country) and LOHB's, both of which could be considered the Sephora of Korea, and are bursting with concessions of many of the smaller, harder-to-find, mid-range brands.

The K-Pop factor

Korean beauty trends continue to be led by idols and celebrities, and as K-pop has expanded, embracing a myriad of Western influences, make-up styles have followed suit. For many years, the "no make-up" natural look was the aspirational default but recently strong colors and experimental tools are hitting the cosmetics counters. Two of the hottest lines right now are Pony Effect, created by a former celebrity make-up artist, and K-pop powerhouse YG Entertainment's very own Moonshot.

Beautiful Inside And Out

If you want to invest more in your skin care, you should consider the higher-end brands – as the old adage goes "you get what you pay for," and the enduring popularity of Amore Pacific, SU:M37, History of Whoo and Sulwhasoo must be proof of this. While many can be found in Lotte Department Store, you can also shop Gangnam-style at Garosu-gil Road in Sinsa-dong. Many cosmetics companies have opened concept stores in this area, alongside the stylish boutiques and cafés that line the streets. Innisfree Jeju House combines both

with an organic café on its second floor. These stores, much like their products, are beautiful both inside and out, offering sleek, stylish and functional packaging that is strides ahead in design. If you still find yourself mystified by the veritable apothecary of choice, don't be afraid to ask the staff for help, or do some further research online to find the best solutions to your own personal aesthetic issues.

Don't underestimate the cheap and cheerful gimmick items like macaron-shaped lip balms



Wine Lip Tint by Labiotte



Ginseng Royal Silk Watery Cream, and Ginseng Royal Silk Essence by Nature Republic



Bio-Peel Gauze Peeling Wine by Neogen



Moisture Sauna Mask, and Firming Sauna Mask by Make P:rem



TASTEBUD TRAVEL

DON'T HAVE TIME OR MONEY FOR A HOLIDAY? HERE ARE THREE RESTAURANTS, AND A NEW COOKBOOK BY LONELY PLANET THAT WILL HELP TAKE YOU FAR, FAR AWAY

Compiled by Mandy Lynn and Annemarie Luck



FRANZ & EVANS LONDON

THE STORY The passion in their food is evident. At Franz & Evans, "passion" is not just a word – it's a taste. Sourcing as locally and organically as possible from suppliers they respect, Franz & Evans' belief in serving fresh, tasty meals has brought its roots from London all the way to Tokyo.

TRAVEL TO ... LONDON Skip the 13-hour flight and take the subway to Omotesando, where you'll find yourself in what feels like Shoreditch, London. All about fresh, gourmet pan-Mediterranean cuisine, everything at Franz & Evans is made fresh daily, from refreshing cold salads to hearty warm dishes, and then more.

WHAT TO ORDER On display are an array of 10 cold salads and five hot dishes, including a succinct a la carte dinner menu. There isn't anything on the menu we didn't enjoy, but we reckon you'll love the sweet potato arancini, vegan salad, and chicken with slow roasted tomatoes and artichoke salad (¥1,380 for three salads, freshly baked bread and a drink during lunch; ¥950 for two salads during dinner). Available during dinner are house signature fish and chips (¥1,200) and zucchini fritters (¥680) that you really shouldn't say no to. 4-9-4 Jingumae, Shibuya-ku. franzeevans.jp

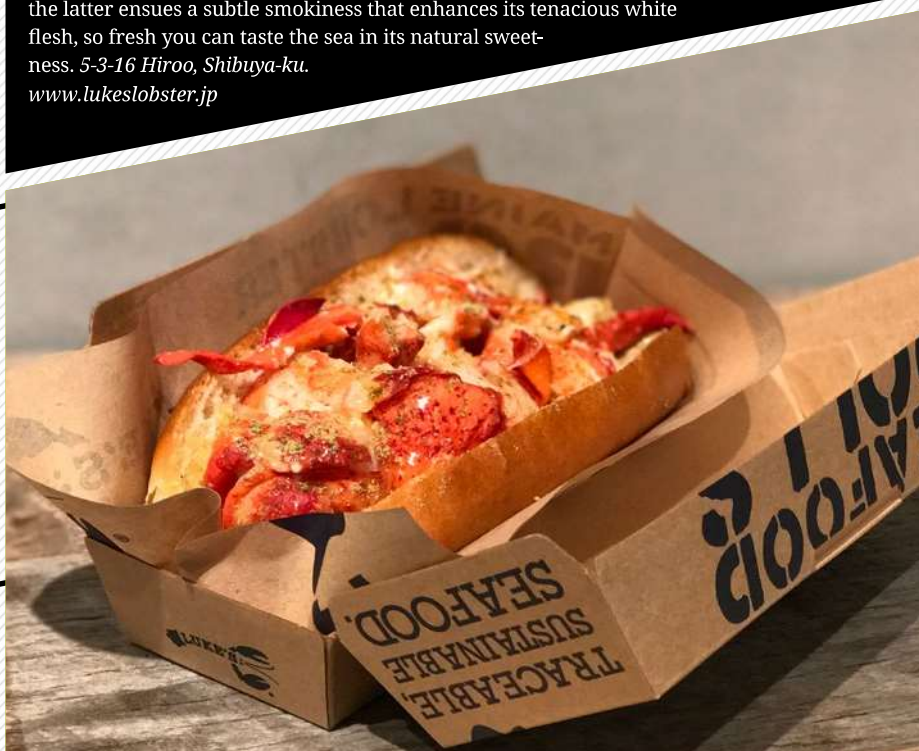
LUKE'S LOBSTER HIROO

THE STORY Luke's Lobster may have begun in New York, but its roots lie in Maine, New England, where co-founder Luke Holden grew up as a lobster fisherman. Famed for its appreciation of good food, Japan was an ideal destination to introduce Maine's lobster eating culture. Their latest outlet opened in Hiroo last November, with a new outlet slated to open in Yokohama this month.

TRAVEL TO ... MAINE Serving traceable sustainable seafood straight from its source, Luke's Lobster keeps it pure and simple with delicious, fuss-free gourmet options to self-service counters, resembling the coastal lobster shacks Holden grew up eating in. A bite of their signature lobster roll is all it takes to be transported to Maine, home to some of the best and freshest seafood.

WHAT TO ORDER Lobster roll (from ¥980) and grilled lobster (from ¥1,080). The former consists of luscious, juicy chunks of lobster in the softest, buttery garlic bun, while the latter ensues a subtle smokiness that enhances its tenacious white flesh, so fresh you can taste the sea in its natural sweetness. 5-3-16 Hiroo, Shibuya-ku.

www.lukeslobster.jp



THE CAVE DE OYSTER

THE STORY The General Oyster Group added this spot to its lineup of seafood eateries in 2014 with the aim of "spreading Western oyster bar culture throughout Japan." To ensure the premium quality and safety of their oysters – which they call "Mineral Oysters" – the group even opened their own cleaning facility in Toyama's Nyuzen town.

TRAVEL TO ... NEW YORK If you've been to New York, no doubt you've spotted or heard about the famed Grand Central Station Oyster Bar, which first opened its doors in 1913. Take up a seat at The Cave De Oyster, which is set underneath Tokyo Station in the Yaesu Chikagai mall, and you might for a moment be able to imagine you're in the heart of the Big Apple. Even the interior is reminiscent of its New York counterpart, with its curved ceiling and spacious dining area that offers both table seating and a counter bar.

WHAT TO ORDER March is the best time to enjoy both Pacific and Rock oysters. Order them as part of a lunch set menu (from ¥926), which is served Japanese style with steamed rice and miso soup. Yaesu Chikagai South Area 1, 2-1 Yaesu, Chuo-ku. www.theoyster.tokyo



COOK YOUR WAY AROUND JAPAN

Lonely Planet's recipe book, From the Source: Japan, delivers the best local dishes from different regions across the country



THE STORY

Following the launch of their recipe book series, *From the Source*, last year, Lonely Planet turns its attention to

cuisine from the world's current "it" destination: Japan. The editors have hunted down some of the country's best local cooks and asked them to share their passion for food along with their region's classic recipes. The result is a collection not only of prized Japanese meals, but also of flowing prose that describes the country's culinary history and philosophies.

TRAVEL TO ... 58 PLACES AROUND JAPAN

The book is divided up into five main sections covering Northern Japan, Tokyo and Central Japan, Kansai, Western Japan, and Southern Japan. Look forward to dishes such as *iga-menchi* (squid croquettes) from Aomori; *hobamiso* (miso on a magnolia leaf) from Gifu; and *okonomiyaki* (savory pancakes) from Hiroshima.

BUY THE BOOK *From the Source: Japan* is available for \$24.99 (about ¥2,836) from Lonely Planet's online shop: tinyurl.com/fromthesource

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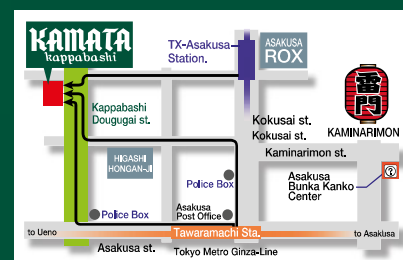
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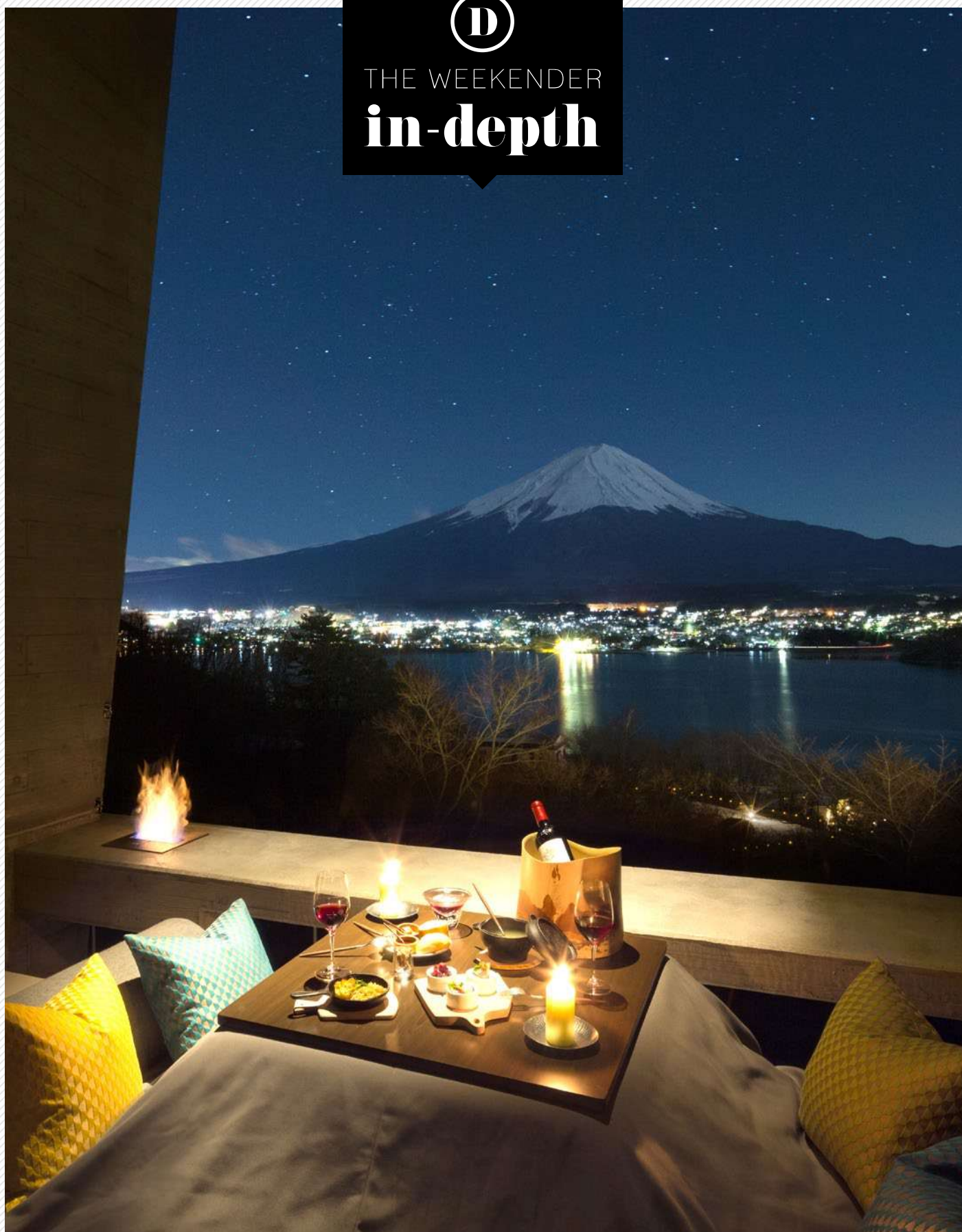
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THE WEEKENDER
in-depth



WISH YOU WERE HERE?

Whether you're planning a first trip to Japan, or you're simply looking for new ways to explore the country, we've got plenty of ideas to add to your itinerary. First up: glamping at the foot of Mt Fuji...

Glamping in Japan

Words by Annemarie Luck

You can tell everyone you're going camping, but you don't actually need to get your hands dirty with these luxury versions of sleeping under the stars

➔ HOSHINOYA FUJI

Described as “Japan’s First Glamping Resort,” Hoshinoya Fuji without a doubt puts more emphasis on the glam. We headed to the resort on a crisp February morning, taking a two-hour bus ride from Shibuya Mark City to Kawaguchiko Station, and from the moment we slid open the door to our cabin (there’s no sleeping in tents here), we felt something akin to falling in love. Except what we were falling for was a mountain named Fuji.

Situated on the slopes of a hill that overlooks Lake Kawaguchi, the resort’s 40 cubical cabins – designed to represent telescopes focusing on Mt Fuji (and featured on this issue’s cover) – have floor-to-ceiling windows that perfectly frame the snow-capped peak. You could easily spend hours just languishing on your sun-drenched balcony – which in winter comes complete with a *kotatsu* (a table with built-in heater and blanket) – but then you’d be missing out on the plethora of pleasures that awaits.

Take a short walk up the hill, deeper into the mountain’s red pine forest, and you’ll arrive at the Cloud Terrace. Here’s where the camping theme comes into play:



“A COUPLE OF TENTS ARE
SUSPENDED BETWEEN
TREES FOR NIGHT-TIME
STAR GAZING”



multiple wooden decks are dotted with comfy chairs and open fires; there’s a hammock in the distance; and a couple of tents are suspended between trees for night-time star gazing. There’s also a plastic igloo hidden amongst the trees and kitted out with table and chairs, books, and a couple of sheepskin rugs – in case you desire even more peace and quiet.

Some of the activities on offer need to be reserved and paid for, such as the Early Morning Canoeing (90 minutes, ¥3,500 per person) and the Mt. Fuji Lava Forest Tour (2.5 hours, ¥6,500 per person), but there is plenty to do for free, too. We tried our hand at wood chopping (harder than it looks), and gorged ourselves on toasted marshmallows and hot chocolate during the afternoon Outdoor Sweets Time. For dinner, we were served a picnic box of six salads presented in stainless steel buckets, creamy Chinese cabbage soup, wine-fed beef – which we grilled ourselves with guidance from the chef – and a Fuji-shaped sponge cake with five sweet toppings that give a nod to the five lakes surrounding the mountain.

The following morning we woke to a grumpy Mt Fuji, refusing to show her face to the world, and realized how lucky we had been the day before. The mountain is notoriously elusive, so if catching a glimpse of the peak is a main reason for visiting, then we’d recommend going in late winter for best weather and visibility. Either way, glamping at the foot of Japan’s most sacred symbol is one for the books. www.hoshinoyafuji.com



↓ THE SOUTHERN PENINSULA

Part of the Village Inc. group (villageinc.jp), which offers several camping sites around Japan, The Southern Peninsula opened in Shizuoka Prefecture late last year. Enjoy glamping in the lush green mountains close to Irozake, surrounded by trees, farms, and temples. The site supplies large cotton tents raised above ground on wooden decks, and a kitchen area with cooking utensils and plenty of seating. All you need to bring is food and your sleeping bag. southern.villageinc.jp



↑ WILD BEACH SEASIDE GLAMPING PARK

Perhaps one of the best things about visiting this “smart camp,” as it’s called on the website, is that you get to take a trip on the Tokyo Bay Aqua-Line bridge-tunnel. Also known as the Trans-Tokyo Bay Highway, the bridge connects Kanagawa’s Kawasaki with Chiba’s Kisazaru, is 14km long, and includes a 9.6km tunnel underneath the bay. The park has a range of facilities, including stylish tents, a chic camping hotel, Airstream trailers, and a barbecue area that overlooks a patch of white sand. wildbeach.jp

→ HATSUSHIMA ISLAND RESORT

Reached by ferry from the city of Atami in Shizuoka Prefecture, Hatsushima is a small island – the population is about 250, and the circumference is only four kilometers – with a warm climate and plenty of diving, snorkeling, fishing, and onsen opportunities. Head to Hatsushima Island Resort for glamping in trailers that overlook the ocean and are surrounded by greenery and hammocks. www.pica-resort.jp/hatsushima



→ WILD MAGIC GLAM BBQ

Although Wild Magic is not offering their glam camping experience this year, we think we spot a hot new trend as the site is set to launch their glam barbecuing (glamecuing?) concept on April 1. To experience the luxurious side of cooking food over fire, hop on a train to Shin-Toyosu Station in Koto-ku, take a short walk to Wild Magic, and soak in views of Rainbow Bridge while “roughing” it like an urbanite. wildmagic.jp



48 HOURS IN SAGA

Words by Annemarie Luck



Eat, drink, and get a taste for the slow life in one of Kyushu's prettiest prefectures



Potter Tatsuya Tsutsui at his Arita studio

You may not be as lucky as we were when you arrive in Saga. It just so happened that we flew in on a day the local seasonal agricultural fair was on the go, its sizeable tent set up right next to the airport. So no sooner had we descended to land – while marveling at the *nori* farm that sprawls out into the Ariake Sea – than we were tucking into steaming fresh ginger tea, sake-flavored pickled *gobo*, and freshly toasted *yakimochi* (warm, sweet rice cakes). A fitting introduction to a prefecture that prides itself on its food, and would go on to offer us 48 hours of not only unique cultural experiences, but also some of the best dining we've had in Japan.

The smallest prefecture on the island of Kyushu, Saga is a delightfully rural place that lies in between Fukuoka and Nagasaki prefectures, with the Genkai Sea to the north and the Ariake Sea to the south. The area produces what's widely regarded as the best *nori* in Japan – in both quality and quantity – and the countryside features an abundance of picturesque terraced rice fields. Nearly 22 percent of the land in Saga Prefecture is

arable, which explains the bountiful produce we encountered at the fair, and 11 percent is protected, which means it has largely remained unspoiled and features a plethora of natural parks.

SAKE, OYSTERS AND ONSEN

After our two-hour flight on Spring Japan from Narita Airport, we rented a car at Kyushu Saga International Airport, and made our way south towards Kashima City's Sakagura Dori, a windy little street that's home to centuries-old sake breweries. We popped in for a tour at Minematsu Sake Brewery, which you'll find at the entrance to the street. Founded in 1916, it's been remodeled to welcome tourists, and the animated owner, Kazukiyo Minematsu, will enthusiastically show you around the shop as well as the "museum" at the back, which is full of fascinating artifacts collected from the Showa period. There is no charge for the tour or the tasting, so we happily indulged in sipping on the brewery's new fruity Hizenhamashuku sake, which was just brewed in January, along with a few varieties of *umeshu*, *shochu*, and *su* (fruit vinegar).



As the sun dropped, we made our way to the coast, taking a right towards the town of Tara, where you'll find oyster-grilling huts along the road, and usually open between December and March (sometimes earlier or later). One of the most popular oyster restaurants is Daifukumaru. Here, we took up seats on the wooden terrace overlooking the sea, with barbecue tables all set up for a DIY dinner. As the sky turned pink, we grilled fat, juicy oysters, washing them down with salty crab soup.

With appetites sated and cheeks pink from the cold ocean air, we checked in at Warakuen, a traditional Japanese-style hotel located in the center of Saga's famed Ureshino hot spring town. If you're visiting during winter, this onsen haven is a must-visit. Besides the luxurious resorts on offer, one of our favorite things about being here was catching sight of couples stealing romantic moments under the stars while dipping their toes in the free, steaming, streetside foot baths.

THROWING BEANS AND CLAY

There's nothing like an early morning onsen to wake you up. Add to that a strong cup of coffee, and day two in Saga was off to an energetic start. Which was lucky, since we soon found ourselves dressed in kimono, standing on a stage with a shrine's chief priest, and tossing beans to a seemingly ravenous crowd. Why? It was Setsubun – the day in Japan that marks the beginning of spring and involves a bean-throwing ceremony – and we were visiting Yutoku Inari Shrine. Founded in 1687, the shrine is built on a steep hillside in Kashima City, and boasts multiple tunnels of red torii gates. To rent a kimono, look for Yutoku-Wasodokoro SARUKU store on the road to the shrine. It's ¥3,500 for the day, giving you ample time to imagine what it was like walking these streets a few hundred years ago.

If history's your thing, you'll also want to be sure to visit Saga Castle in Saga City. Plagued by fires, the castle has been rebuilt several times since the 17 century, so the current build-

“
AS THE SKY
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SALTY CRAB SOUP
”

ing is largely a redeveloped version. Still, this doesn't detract from its splendor and strong sense of Japan's samurai past as you stroll around its exquisite interior. After a short stop for lunch at Gallery Arita, where you can purchase some of Arita Town's famed porcelain ceramics and drink from impossibly pretty teacups, we visited the pottery studio of artist Tatsuya Tsutsui. Arita is considered the birthplace of Japanese porcelain, so it's no surprise that Tsutsui has chosen to base himself here. Besides creating his own works, he also offers lessons, with some pottery enthusiasts traveling from abroad to spend a couple of weeks with him and improve their techniques. As he demonstrated the basics of throwing clay, at one point giving us a turn to try our hand at the wheel, we took a moment to appreciate the creative calm in the room and thought, *Wouldn't it be nice to switch to the delicious slow life in Saga?*

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Porcelain torii gate at Tozan Shrine



4 MORE THINGS TO DO

1 VISIT THE PORCELAIN TORII

As you climb the stairs up to Tozan Shrine in Arita, you'll catch sight of this torii gate made from porcelain. It was built in 1888 and is full of cracks, but we think this simply adds to its beauty.

2 EAT THE ALIEN OF ARIAKE

This little monster is actually a fish called *warasubo*, but thanks to its less-than-attractive features, it's been nicknamed the "Alien of Ariake." The city even made a short "horror" movie about it: tinyurl.com/ariake-alien

3 TASTE SAKE AT AMABUKI BREWERY

This beautiful brewery makes its unique-tasting sake using yeast cultivated from flowers, and rice grown in pesticide-free paddies where ducks swim freely.

4 JOIN THE BALLOON FIESTA

This annual hot-air balloon festival is held in autumn at Kase Riverside in Saga City, and features over 100 balloons from around the world. If you can't make the fiesta, visit the Saga Balloon Museum, opened in October 2016.

Inside Saga Castle

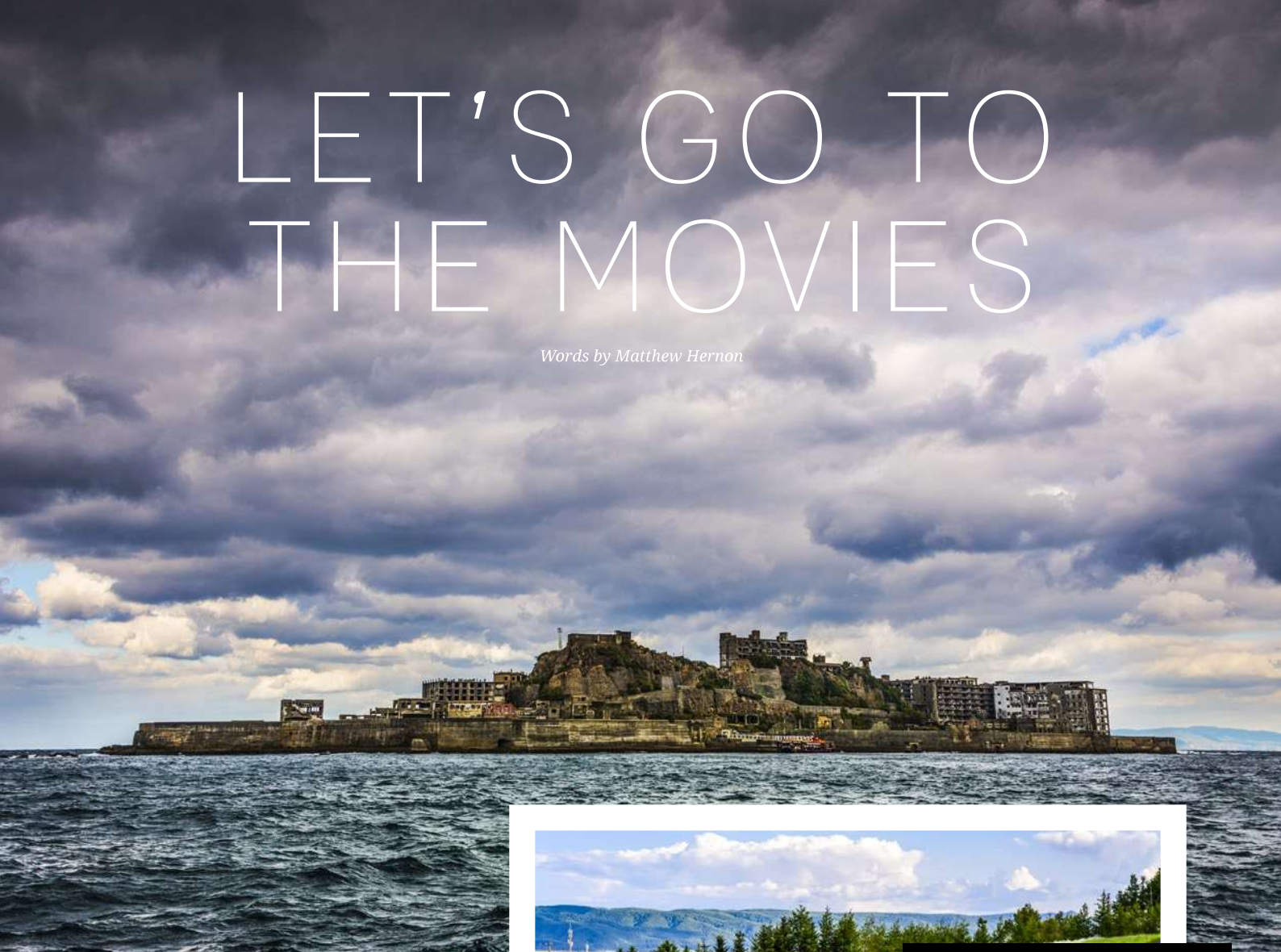


The view while grilling oysters at Daifukumaru



LET'S GO TO THE MOVIES

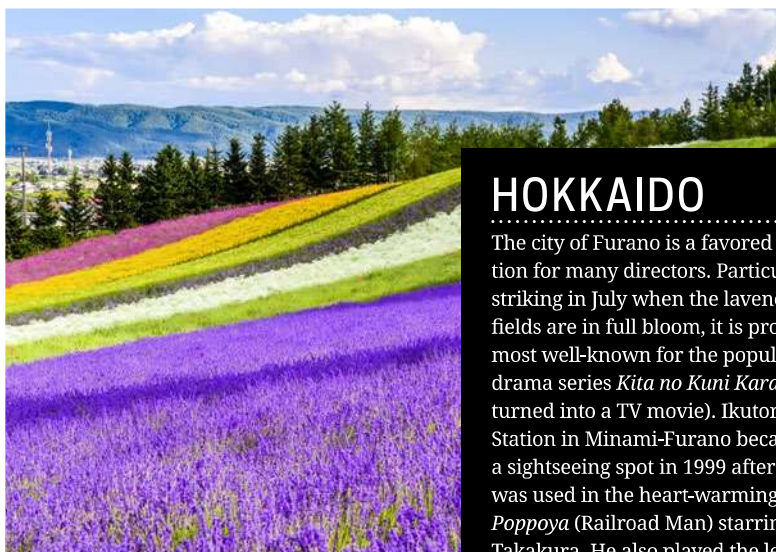
Words by Matthew HERNON



Take a cinematic trip around Japan by following the footsteps of some of our favorite on-screen characters, and visiting some of the country's most picturesque film locations

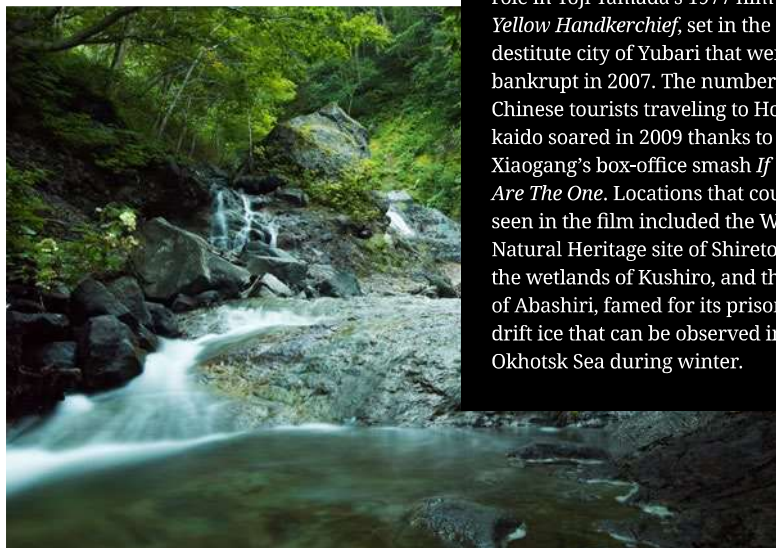
NAGASAKI

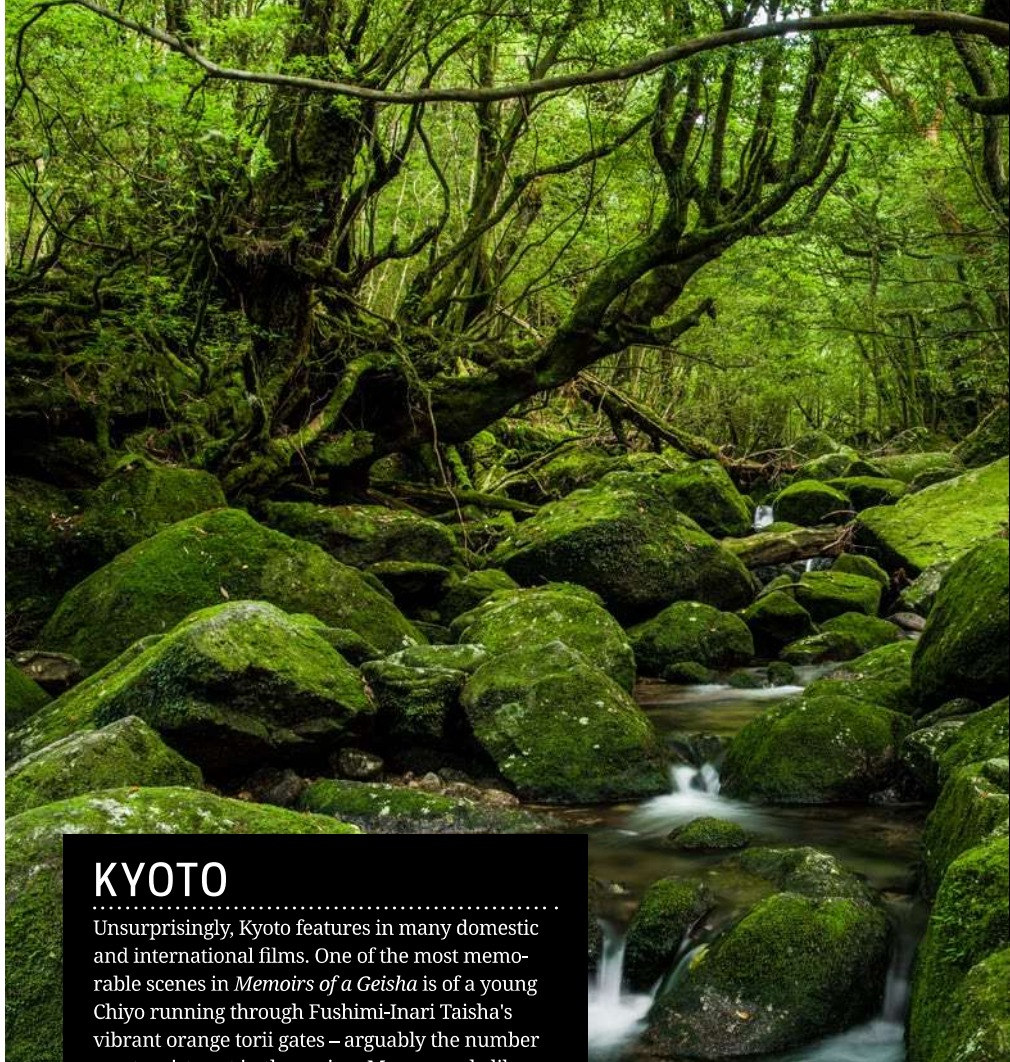
External shots of Hashima Island, better known as Gunkanjima (Battleship Island), were used in the 2012 James Bond film *Skyfall*. One of 505 uninhabited islands in Nagasaki Prefecture, it's an eerie, yet fascinating place that's full of concrete buildings that were abandoned after Mitsubishi closed its mine there in 1974. Re-opened to the public 35 years later, it was recently approved as a UNESCO World Heritage site. Based on novels by Ryu Murakami and Shuichi Yoshida, respectively, Lee Sang-il's movies *69 Sixty Nine* and *Akunin* (Villain) were both shot in Nagasaki City. This was also the setting for Shusaku Endo's book *Silence*, though Martin Scorsese's recent big screen adaptation was actually filmed in Taiwan. The American director did visit a number of sites in the region that inspired the film such as the 26 Martyrs Monument and Unzen Jigoku (Hell), a hotspot of volcanic activity where Christians were previously tortured to death.



HOKKAIDO

The city of Furano is a favored location for many directors. Particularly striking in July when the lavender fields are in full bloom, it is probably most well-known for the popular drama series *Kita no Kuni Kara* (later turned into a TV movie). Ikutara Station in Minami-Furano became a sightseeing spot in 1999 after it was used in the heart-warming tale *Poppoya* (Railroad Man) starring Ken Takakura. He also played the lead role in Yoji Yamada's 1977 film *The Yellow Handkerchief*, set in the now destitute city of Yubari that went bankrupt in 2007. The number of Chinese tourists traveling to Hokkaido soared in 2009 thanks to Feng Xiaogang's box-office smash *If You Are The One*. Locations that could be seen in the film included the World Natural Heritage site of Shiretoko, the wetlands of Kushiro, and the city of Abashiri, famed for its prison and drift ice that can be observed in the Okhotsk Sea during winter.





KYOTO

Unsurprisingly, Kyoto features in many domestic and international films. One of the most memorable scenes in *Memoirs of a Geisha* is of a young Chiyo running through Fushimi-Inari Taisha's vibrant orange torii gates – arguably the number one tourist spot in the region. Many people like to visit Heian Jingu to recreate one of the more reflective parts of *Lost in Translation* where Charlotte (Scarlett Johansson) walks around the shrine's garden before skipping across the pond's stone walkway. Legendary Japanese filmmaker Kenji Mizoguchi would often shoot his movies in Kyoto, including classics such as *Sisters of the Gion* and *The Life of Oharu*. He was particularly fond of Ninnaji Temple, famed for its late-blooming cherry trees which draw huge crowds every year. The shooting of *jidai-geki* (period drama) films can be observed at Toei Uzumasa Eigamura (Toei Kyoto Studio Park).



KAGOSHIMA

OK, so it may not be the actual filming location, but Yakushima must be included as it provided the inspiration for Hayao Miyazaki's masterpiece *Princess Mononoke*. A gripping tale exploring the impact of humanity's greed on the environment, it's no surprise the anime master chose this mysterious tropical island in Kagoshima Prefecture famed for its world-class hiking trails, haunting forests and enormous cedar trees, some of which are over 1,000 years old. Yakushima is a 30-minute flight or a three-hour ferry ride from Kagoshima City, another destination well worth visiting, particularly to witness the active volcano, Sakurajima. The bay of Kagoshima can be seen in numerous movies, including Hirokazu Koreeda's tearjerker *I Wish* and *Tora! Tora! Tora!*, the Japanese-American historical drama that realistically portrayed the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. [Flip to page 27 for more top tips on things to do while in Kagoshima.]



HYOGO

Fans of Stars Wars may be interested in the white rugged cliffs of the Horai Valley in the Rokko Mountains. Not far from Kobe, it's one of the main locations of Akira Kurosawa's adventure film *The Hidden Fortress*, which George Lucas said inspired parts of his own saga. Himeji Castle – the prefecture's premier site – is shown in two Kurosawa flicks, *Kagemusha* and *Ran*, as well as the James Bond movie *You Only Live Twice*. Nearby at the top of Mount Shosha in Himeji lies Engyoji Temple, where Nathan Algren (Tom Cruise) and Katsumoto (Ken Watanabe) had some of their conversations in *The Last Samurai*. During your stay in Hyogo, it's worth taking a trip to the scenic highlands of Tonomine and Mineyama, both of which featured heavily in Tran Anh Hung's adaption of Haruki Murakami's bestselling novel *Norwegian Wood*.

CHERRY BLOSSOM ODYSSEY

Compiled by Matthew HERNON

Looking for a new way to appreciate spring's sakura? Follow the flowers across Japan as they bloom from south to north, and explore the must-see sights of our featured areas while you're at it

FUKUOKA

Forecasted blossoming: March 26,
full bloom April 6

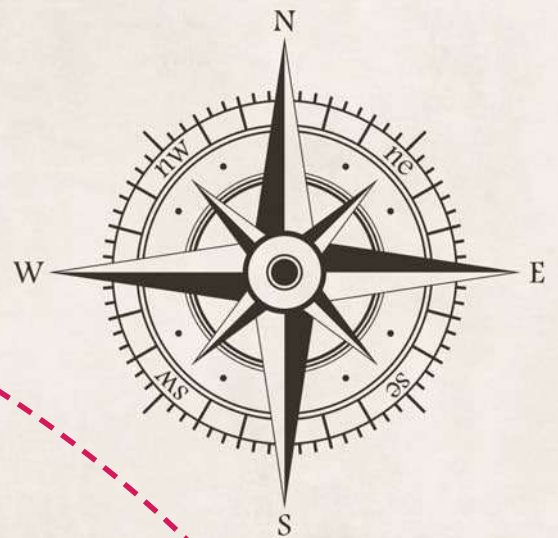
No area of Japan does street cuisine quite like Fukuoka. There are over 150 food stalls – known as *yatai* – in the city, though it's usually the ones serving Hakata-style *tonkotsu* ramen (thin noodles prepared in a pork bone-based soup) that draw the biggest crowds. One of the most idyllic locations in the region is the massive Uminonakamichi Seaside Park, which has millions of flowers and 2,000 cherry trees. Worthwhile day trips from Fukuoka include the castle town of Yanagawa and the splendid Dazaifu Tenmangu Shrine.



NARA

Forecasted blossoming: March 31,
full bloom April 6

Quite like Kyoto, only much smaller and with fewer tourists, Nara is particularly charming during hanami season. A gentle stroll through Nara Park alongside the 1,200 or so deer and 1,700 different kinds of cherry trees leads to most of the city's main attractions such as Kofukuji's five-story pagoda, Kasuga Taisha, and Todaiji Temple, home to the Great Buddha statue. Nara Prefecture's Mt. Yoshino, a two-hour train ride from Nara City, has 30,000 cherry trees and is widely regarded as "Japan's number one cherry blossom site."





HAKODATE

Forecasted blossoming: early May

The night view from the top of Mount Hakodate is stunning, particularly just after sunset. Another great vantage point of the city comes from the Goryokaku Tower. This is the best position to see the huge star-shaped citadel that was built to protect Hakodate from Western forces. Over 1,000 cherry trees were planted along its moats, making it one of the country's top hanami spots. Onuma Park, a little north of Hakodate, is also a popular cherry blossom viewing location.



SENDAI

Forecasted blossoming: April 14, full bloom April 18

Affectionately called "The City of Trees," Sendai has an abundance of greenery, various sights paying homage to the great Daimyo Masamune Date, and numerous *gyutan* (sliced cow's tongue) restaurants. As for hanami, the most popular location in the city is the spacious Mikamine Park, though it's probably worth going a little south of Sendai to Shiroishi Riverside for its magnificent eight kilometer-long sakura tunnel. A day trip to the 260 pine-clad islands of Matsushima Bay is also highly recommended.



NAGANO

Forecasted blossoming: April 12, full bloom April 17

Host of the 1998 Winter Olympics, Nagano is best known for its ski slopes and onsens. The city's must-see sight is the seventh century Zenko-ji Temple and the adjoining Joyama Park, boasting around 500 cherry trees. Within the prefecture, Takato Castle Park is the best hanami spot, though Matsumoto Castle is also worth visiting. The unique experience of seeing wild monkeys bathing can be enjoyed at the Jigokudani (Hell Valley) in Yamanouchi.



KANAZAWA

Forecasted blossoming: April 5, full bloom April 10

Considered one of "the three most beautiful landscape gardens in Japan," Kanazawa's Kenrokuen is enticing all year round. It has plum and cherry trees in the spring, azaleas and irises in the summer, colorful foliage in the autumn and snow-covered landscapes in the winter. Other places of interest in the city include the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, the old samurai area of Nagamachi and the Higashi Chaya (teahouse) District, where geisha perform.





Whisky Distillery in Kyushu?

Welcome to Tsunuki, our historic distillery!

Hombo Shuzo has been rooted in Tsunuki since 1872.

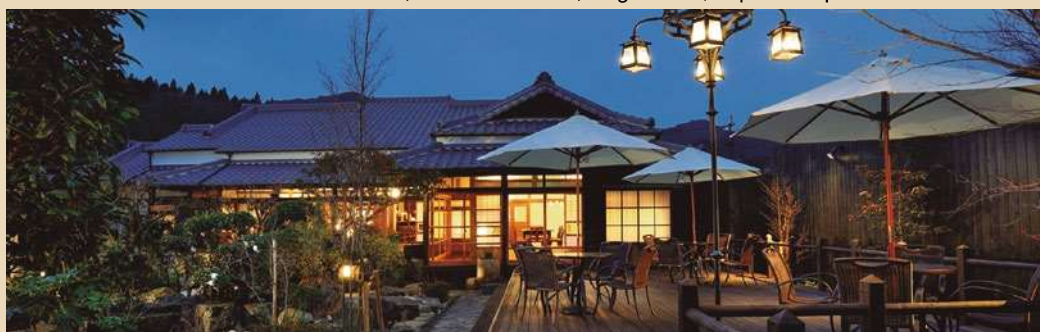
And 2016 was a year of renovation: a new whisky distillery, a history museum, and a fancy café bar were built alongside the old parts of the distillery.

Come and find out about our company history, our whisky making, and indulge yourself in Mars whisky...



MARS TSUNUKI DISTILLERY

Opening Hours: 9AM-4PM, except Dec.29-Jan.3. Location: 6594 Kasedatsunuki, Minamisatsuma, Kagoshima, Japan Telephone: 0993-44-2001



HOMBO SHUZO CO.,LTD. www.hombo.co.jp

10

WAYS TO ENJOY KAGOSHIMA

Nicknamed the Naples of Japan, Kagoshima is located on the southern tip of Kyushu, and is endowed with some of the most spectacular scenery in Japan including seas, mountains, rivers, hot springs, and volcanoes. Over the next 13 pages, we take you on a journey through the best of the prefecture, giving you plenty of tips on things to do and where to stay.

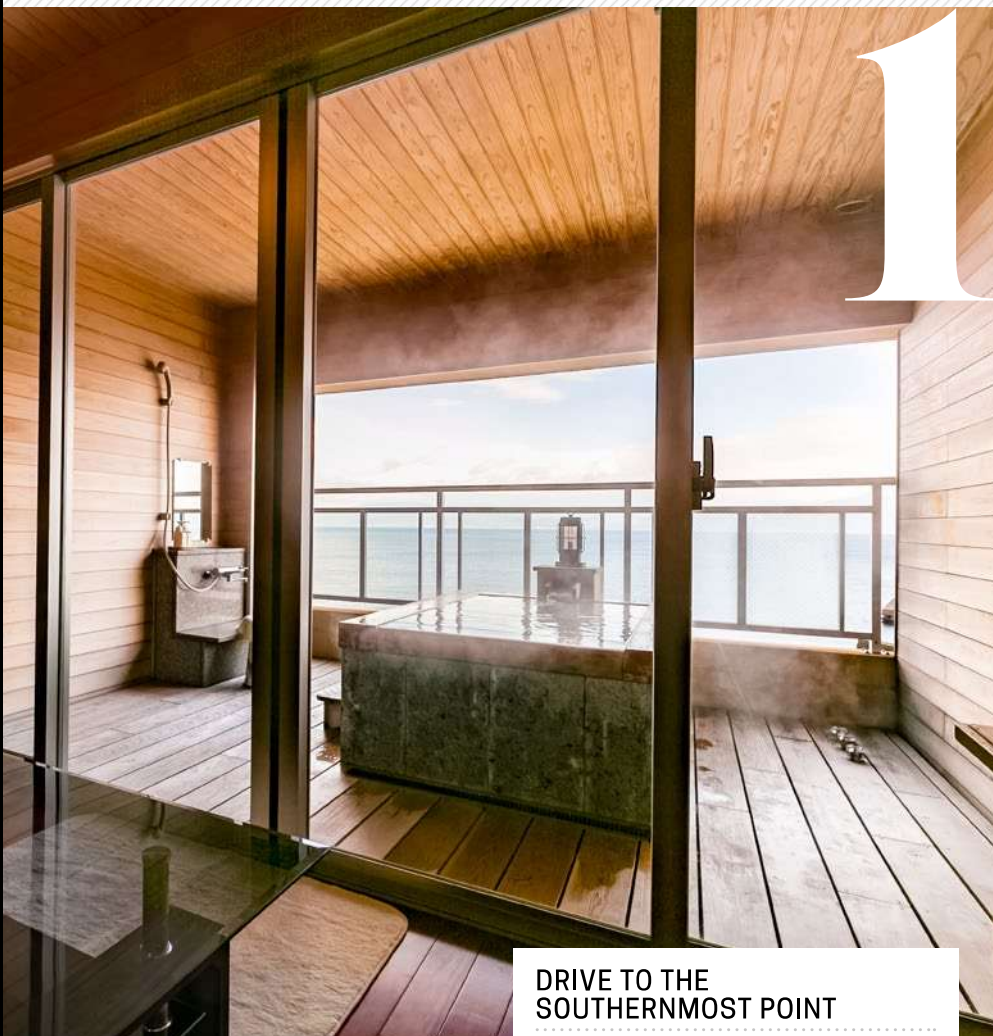


TAKE A HOT SAND BATH AT IBUSUKI SEASIDE HOTEL



Opened in Ibusuki City in Kagoshima in 1960, this seaside hotel has long been revered for its hospitality and service. The hotel has also kept up appearances with refurbished rooms completed to the highest modern standards, featuring large lounge areas and Western or Japanese style beds. For the best views, choose one of the suites with a balcony bath that looks on to the wide ocean. But for maximum relaxation, try one of the hotel's hot-sand baths, which entails immersing yourself in volcanic (hot!) sand until you are buried up to your neck. Stay put for 10 to 15 minutes – be prepared to sweat – and reap the health benefits, which include improving circulation, relieving arthritis, opening your skin's pores, and helping to get rid of toxins.

Hamahata, Ju-cho, Ibusuki City, Kagoshima.
0993-23-3111. www.ibusuki-seaside.co.jp

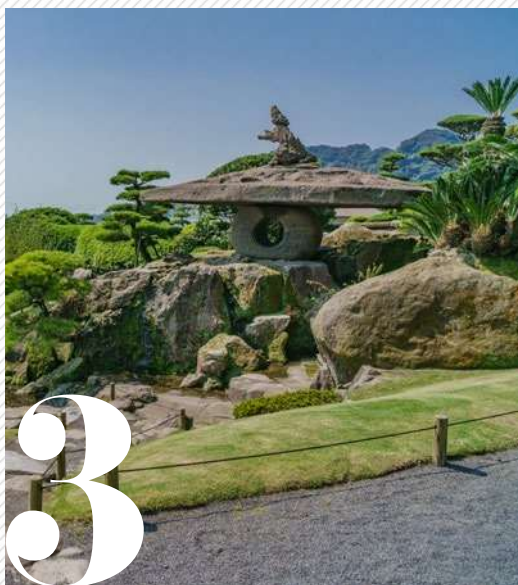


DRIVE TO THE SOUTHERNMOST POINT

Cape Nagasaki marks this point on the Satsuma Peninsula. Behind the small white lighthouse, up the slope of the Cape, you'll find Ryugu Shrine. The bright red and orange colors of the shrine contrast sharply with the blue sea, where the god Ryugu is said to live. Shells replace traditional wooden *mamori* boards, and shrine-goers can write their wish and place it carefully into a wooden bucket nearby. The drive to the cape is quite scenic as well; it takes you around Mt Kaimon, past wild sunflower fields, and the popular Flower Park Kagoshima.

SEE AN ACTIVE VOLCANO

Sakurajima is perhaps one of the sites with which people are most familiar when they think of Kagoshima. The volcano on the island is famously known to react and erupt on an almost daily basis. Not every day is so lucky; often, the summit may be enveloped in clouds or haze, or the eruptions so small that they go undetected from across the bay. You can view the volcano from Shiroyama Observatory, or take a ferry to the island and climb 373m up to Yunohira Observation Point. Ferry info: tinyurl.com/TW-sakurajima-ferry



DRINK TEA IN A HISTORICAL GARDEN

Across the bay from Sakurajima is one of the most important parks in Japan: Sengan-en. Created in 1658 primarily as the grounds for a villa under Lord Shimadzu Mitsuhisa, it is preserved today as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a garden for visitors to learn about the history of Satsuma (the old name of Kagoshima). Head to the Shoko Shuseikan museum for a serving of Satsuma history with a side of sweet potatoes and tea. A bus stops directly outside the gardens, just 10 minutes from downtown Kagoshima City. www.senganen.jp/en





EAT FISH FLAKES WITH A VIEW

Perhaps the most impressive part of Makurazaki City is not the delicious southern food, or the warm ocean beaches, but the smell. Makurazaki produces much of the fish flakes found in Japanese supermarkets – and yes, the smell of fish is strong in the air, although it doesn't take long to get used to. The roads run high in the mountains, and the vista has inspired countless works of art, particularly old Buddhist paintings. Even Hollywood used Makurazaki and its mountains as a backdrop during the production of the 1967 James Bond film *You Only Live Twice*.

CLIMB KAGOSHIMA'S "FUJI"

Considered to be the "Satsuma Fuji," Mt Kaimon rises prominently in the midst of Kagoshima's "healthy lands," where the soil is richest for farming, flowers grow wild, and the hot springs are the clearest and freshest. Although it's considered an active volcano, the last sign of any activity was an emission of light volcanic gas in 2000, and before that the last great eruption was in 885. The mountain is close to Ryugu Shrine, and you can hike to its 924m-high summit in a few hours.



POLISH OFF A BOWLFUL OF KAGOSHIMA SOUL FOOD

You couldn't talk about Japanese comfort cuisine without mentioning ramen, in all its delectable regional varieties. The local style features thick, chewy noodles and cloudy pork bone broth, flavored with chicken stock, dried sardines, veggies, kelp, and mushrooms. Looking for the best place to try this hometown fave? Noboruya's your spot. They've been serving up their unique take on Kagoshima ramen since 1947. They recently relocated to the Kinseicho neighborhood, but the flavor – and the warm welcome – hasn't changed a bit. *Kinsei Bldg. 1F, Kinseicho 6-9, Kagoshima*

8



Celebrate the Southern Spirit

A celebrated Japanese whisky maker goes back to its roots as it prepares to serve up medal-worthy distillations come 2020

When it comes to whisky, time is always on your side. The longer the liquor remains in its casks, the more time it has to age, mellow, and develop a fuller flavor. The same could be said for the stories that lie behind the distilleries themselves.

And though the lineage of Japanese whisky makers might not go as far back as their Gaelic forebears, their histories, albeit shorter, are equally fascinating. They are testaments to the learning that takes place between cultures, Japan's interest in Western institutions, and the ingenuity of Japanese innovators who adapted foreign practices and transformed them into something unique. They are filled with stories of mentors, friends, and in some cases, deep and abiding love.

Of course, two of the most famous figures in Japanese whisky are Masataka and Rita Taketsuru. Taketsuru met Rita Cowan in Scotland while he was studying Japanese whisky making, and he would go on to found Nikka Whisky in 1934. But the tale of the "Father of Japanese whisky" might have never begun were it not for Kiichiro Iwai. Iwai was Taketsuru's boss at the company that sent him to Scotland, and it was Iwai who mentored his protégé and encouraged the overseas research trip.

Years later, and following the launch of Nikka Whisky, Iwai was working with Hombo Shuzo, a Kagoshima-based distillery that had its roots in *shochu* (traditional Japanese spirits). The company was granted a whisky production license in 1949, and started production at a Yamanashi Prefecture facility in 1960, with Iwai helming the operations. Years back, Taketsuru had shared his Scotland whisky report with Iwai, who used the findings to build whisky pot stills that are still being used to this day.

In 1985 Mars Whisky moved its distilling facilities to Shinshu in Nagano Prefecture, but in the years before and those that followed, Mars had to grapple with the rising and falling demand in the Japanese market for domestic whisky. The company stopped distilling for nearly 20 years before beginning again in 2011, coinciding with a boom in global interest and demand for Japanese whisky.

“
A THIRST FOR
GREATNESS
AND A SPIRIT OF
CURIOSITY
”



The most important recent event in the Mars Whisky history has been the opening of the Tsunuki Distillery. Production began in November of last year (Mars had already been using the facility to age Shinshu-distilled whisky for some time), and they're on schedule to finish aging the whiskies they're now producing, just in time for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. And while the high temperatures and humidity may have been an initial impediment to producing whisky in Kagoshima, the new facilities are built to counteract the worst effects of the Kyushu climate, and even harness the unorthodox conditions – including those at another warehouse for aging in Yakushima – to develop one-of-a-kind flavors. And of course, those pot stills you'll see as you tour the distillery are based on those first created by that "Silent Pioneer" of Japanese whisky, Kiichiro Iwai.

Of course, a tour of the Tsunuki Distillery wouldn't be complete without sampling Mars and Hombo's fine whisky, brandy, *umeshu* (plum liqueur), shochu made from Kagoshima sweet potatoes, and more at the Hojo café bar, located next to this new facility.

And one thing a taste (or three) will tell you about Mars's products: they're hardly run of the mill. Suntory and Nikka may be the two giants of Japanese whisky, but Mars occupies a particularly interesting position in third place. For some time, Mars has been less interested in simply imitating the style of Scottish whisky and more concerned with offering a variety of intriguing flavor profiles that have inspired ardent fans both here and abroad. Among the many limited-release whiskies available for purchase at the distillery are HHAE Mars Blended Whisky; the 30-Year Single Malt Komagatake, which was bottled in 1986; and the Komagatake Single Malt Tsunuki Aging, which was first produced in Shinshu and then aged for three years in bourbon barrels in Tsunuki's aging cellars.

In three and a half years, the world's eyes will be on Tokyo as athletes from around the globe strive for personal bests, but we have a feeling that international whisky connoisseurs just might be booking tickets farther south, to taste the distillation of a story that reflects a thirst for greatness and a spirit of curiosity.

More information at www.hombo.co.jp



GET UP CLOSE TO VOLCANOES AND SAMURAI AT HOTEL SHIROYAMA

.....
*A room with a view, plus a stay that's steeped in history –
all this and more at the prestigious Hotel Shiroyama*



Not many hotels can lay a claim to a direct link to Japan's last true samurai. But Hotel Shiroyama can. In fact, the high plateau on which the hotel was built – one that offers stunning views of Kagoshima City and the active volcano of Mt Sakurajima – was once the home of Takamori Saigo: a native son of Kagoshima, a cultural figure whose influence remains strong to this day, and the inspiration for Ken Watanabe's unforgettable character Katsumoto in the film *The Last Samurai* [see page 23].

While the noble Takamori's story came to an end at the Battle of Shiroyama, he is finding a new life on the small screen next January, in NHK's night drama *Saigo Don*. In preparation for this upcoming celebration of the former resident of Hotel Shiroyama's grounds, the hotel is marking the occasion with exhibitions throughout the hotel.

And, this is far from the Hotel Shiroyama's only brush with history: the Imperial Family stays here every time they visit Kagoshima, and countless other politicians, diplomats, and executives have chosen to stay at this storied, elegant location. Read on to find out more about what brings so many people to Hotel Shiroyama, and why they continue to come back year after year.



THE HOTEL IS
CONSTRUCTED ON A
PLATEAU THAT IS THE
HIGHEST POINT IN THE
CITY, AND IS THE SAME
AREA OF GROUND THAT
WAS ONCE CALLED HOME
BY THE LEGENDARY
“LAST SAMURAI”
TAKAMORI SAIGO



ONSEN WITH A VOLCANO VIEW

The hotel's open-air spa onsen provides healing, mineral-rich waters for relaxation as well as relief of ailments such as joint pain, muscle stiffness, poor circulation, and general fatigue. The hot spring looks out across Kagoshima, offering superb views of the city as well as Sakurajima island, making your bathing experience even

more satisfying. There's also an indoor spa, a relaxation room, and an ion sauna where steam from a hot spring buried 1,000m below ground helps your body detox and leaves you with smooth and supple skin. For an extra charge, guests are also welcome to book a private soak in the Chartered bath, a luxurious onsen with a pretty courtyard view.

AN INHOUSE MICROBREWERY

The art of making liquor goes back generations in Kagoshima, so it may not be too surprising to find a micro beer brewery tucked away on the site of a hotel in the area. Established in 1998, the Shiroyama Brewery – which is located within Hotel Shiroyama – is a small but neat addition to the region's proud tradition for making fine brews. The brewery's manager has traveled the world not only to secure the best equipment – which is imported from Canada – but also to ensure your experience when visiting is complete: you can marvel at his encyclopedic grasp of the world's beers while enjoying a tasting on site. Some of the award-winning beers you can look forward to here include the Belgian white ale, which owes its refreshing taste to the use of Sakurajima mandarins, and a fruity pale ale infused with tea and loquat leaves.





EXQUISITE SATSUMA KIRIKO (CUT GLASS)

Visitors to Hotel Shiroyama would be remiss if they did not find time to visit the hotel's cut glass boutique. There, a fine selection of the region's pottery and glassware can be enjoyed – and purchased. Production of Satsuma Kiriko (Satsuma cut glass) – such as crystal glasswares and glass sheets – in the area began in the 19th century, thanks to the patronage of Shimazu Narioki, a feudal lord with a love of fine glassware. He invited glassmakers from Edo (present day Tokyo) to practice their work around Kagoshima. These artisans had learned many of their techniques from foreign sources, thanks to the influx of Western learning through trade based around the port of Nagasaki. After a few generations of refinement, the characteristic qualities of Satsuma Kiriko had emerged: extraordinarily detailed facets cut into surfaces with the precision of a jeweler and bold color patterns created from the use of overlaid glass of varying hues.

EXCELLENT DINING

Eleven restaurants are available in the hotel including the vast breakfast hall, which offers both Western and Japanese food. We recommend the European inspired Holt garden restaurant. Known locally for its buffet, Holt serves 50 kinds of globally-inspired cuisine. During lunch, the restaurant offers dishes from Korea, Thailand, Italy, India and dozens of other countries. For dinner, Holt's chefs go all out, making a total of 80 dishes and unlimited drinks available for patrons. Explore the hotel further and you will discover a dedicated sushi bar, a Cantonese restaurant serving sumptuous Chinese food, and a Japanese restaurant set in the surroundings of a traditional garden.

Next to the lobby a casual coffee lounge offers American-style sandwiches and Japanese favorites, making it the perfect place to plan your day out in Kagoshima.



Statue of "Last Samurai" Takamori Saigo



CONTACT

Hotel Shiroyama Kagoshima, Shinshoincho
41-1, Kagoshima-shi, Kagoshima-ken
Tel: 099-224-2200 | Web: www.shiroyama-g.co.jp

HOW TO GET THERE

For a business meeting, a family holiday or a romantic break, the scale and variety of Hotel Shiroyama offers something for almost any budget. Traveling to Hotel Shiroyama is easy thanks to close proximity to Kagoshima airport and direct trains to Osaka and beyond via the recently-completed high-speed Kyushu Shinkansen. The hotel also runs a shuttle bus that connects to Kagoshima-Chuo Station (Central Station) and downtown Tenmonkan. The bus runs every 30 minutes and is very convenient for those who want to explore the many restaurants, hot springs and sightseeing areas, or need to connect to Kagoshima airport.

10

Escape

AT LUXURY RYOKAN
HAKUSUIKAN

Consistently ranked among the country's top ryokan, Hakusuikan rivals small cities with its list of attractions

My father built Hakusuikan over 60 years ago, in 1947. It's evolved quite a bit since it was first opened, and I plan to go even further with it," says Tadataka Shimotakehara as he speaks about the family business. He has already gone quite a long way. After joining the Mitsubishi Corporation after graduation, Shimotakehara was stationed overseas. He lived in Manhattan and later studied Russian and Political Science at Harvard, and eventually moved to Russia and worked at a chemical plant.

His ryokan is a reflection of this broad international experience – it's an expansive, 69-acre campus of surprises around every corner. Even a weeklong stay is not enough time to experience all Shimotakehara provides for his guests.





“
I WANT TO
PROVIDE
JAPANESE
GUESTS WITH AN
EXPERIENCE THAT
MAKES THEM
FEEL REMOVED
FROM JAPAN
”

LUXURIATE IN VARIETY

Hakusuikan combines what his father established, a solid infrastructure based on southern Okinawan traditions (“It was all the rage in the 50s”), mixed with global influences from more recent decades. “I want to provide Japanese guests with an experience that makes them feel removed from Japan.” Shimotakehara has reached that goal in numerous ways. There are just under 20 restaurants, dining halls, cafés, and lounges in the complex, each with different themes and cuisines. There are high-end restaurants on-site as well, including the highly acclaimed Fenice Italian restaurant. Surrounded by a moat, and lit by torches at night, it’s a considerably romantic place. Other hints of globalism can be seen throughout the halls. Traditional Japanese art mixes with pieces from overseas. Turtles may be crawling in one hallway, while another might feature an entire hall of plants. Doors are covered in hand-painted exotic flowers. Hakusuikan hosts traditional Japanese weddings, and ceremonies from other religious backgrounds at different venues on site.



70cm below the sand, and is layered with more sand underneath for stability. Every day, we cycle through [the equivalent of] 450 tons of fresh onsen water.”

BASKING IN HISTORY

About 250 years ago, residents of Kagoshima were looking for ways to export their products to a worldwide audience. Following the re-opening of Japan’s doors, and the immediate fame of “Japonism” after the 1867 World Fair, there was a rise in demand of Japanese products. The Satsuma

Denshokan Museum houses a number of pieces that were made and exported around the world from Kagoshima.

The ground floor is an impressive collection of ceramics, mostly the creations of generations of Kagoshima artisans, while upstairs exhibits delve into local history of the area that was once known as Satsuma. The leaders of this region, including Saigo Takamori, played a significant role in the development of modern Japan, and a wide variety of scrolls and paintings record the lives and times of these powerful figures. All staff on site are highly knowledgeable and available to give tours and answer questions.

Outside on the borders of the forest, Shimotakehara surveys the land. “I’m going to expand and add in a port, and let guests use boats here someday.” He looks back at the towers and long wings. “Right now we can have up to 700 guests, but I want to be able to support more, and bring more people to Kagoshima; it’s overlooked often by tourists who want to see Tokyo, which is a shame.”



BATHING BEAUTY

Of course, Hakusuikan is, first and foremost, an onsen ryokan. The main hot springs hall is enormous. While much of the hotel replicates an Edo-style building, the onsen hall imitates a Genroku (Golden Age of Japan: 1688–1704) style; there is a tall wooden bridge over a large hot spring, and smaller hot springs are divided into small rooms that look like traditional bars, with lanterns hanging over them and Meiji period–style artwork covering all of the walls.

In a separate area, Hakusuikan offers its own famous Kagoshima sand bath. The traditional sand bath dates back 200 years, and is a considered a natural exfoliating process that helps “sweat out” toxins in the body. “Water from the onsen runs about



CONTACT

Ibusuki Hakuruikan
12126-12 Higashikata, Ibusuki City,
Kagoshima | Tel: 0993-22-3131
Web: www.hakusuikan.co.jp/en



“We Have a Solution to Cancer”

Introducing the groundbreaking proton beam therapy offered at Medipolis Medical Research Institute in Kagoshima



fewest earthquakes of any region, and the warmest climate, and the most nature. It's peaceful: a peace our patients feel when they're here."

Patients only need to see one of the doctors on site and receive the proton treatment for 30 minutes daily. "We are closed Saturday and Sunday," he says with a smile. "Even cancer gets a holiday." The mood is completely different from that of a hospital – there are rich colors everywhere; staff members wear Hawaiian-print shirts; and there are plants and stuffed toys on counters. "I want our patients to feel at ease," says Hishikawa. Morale around the facility is positive, as are the treatment results. Last September, a 14-year-old girl received treatment here – support for her recovery was so overwhelming that when she was diagnosed, and her mother shared the sad news online, the family received ¥9 million in donations towards her medical fee.

The enormous proton beam machine was provided, and is now maintained daily, by Mitsubishi staff to make sure nothing goes awry. The accelerator, Synchrotron, is just as impressive. "It accelerates the particles nearly to the speed of light. It takes 70 seconds to complete the process. We use computers to 3D-map the cancer, and pinpoint the location. Then, it's 15 minutes to line up the proton beam. After that, the light is beamed every two seconds for one minute. Then the process repeats once more. And that's it."

For more information, visit medipolis-ptrc.org/english

Please, do not call it a research facility, a clinic, or a hospital. It is a place for therapy, it is for recovery, and it is for the future," says Yoshio Hishikawa in a gentle yet insistent voice. Hishikawa has been the director of Medipolis since it opened in January 2011. He's been working towards this goal of devoting his life to particle therapy for almost 30 years. "Cancer rates are rising. We need to watch out for everything – even milk, and the increasing amount of hormones used. Then there's the concern people have after receiving a diagnosis. Many go untreated because of the pain, the cost, and the slim chance of full recovery. But we have a solution."

The solution is proton beam therapy. It irradiates and destroys cancer cells in just three to seven weeks, depending on the size and the type of cancer. On paper, it sounds remarkable, and as of now, only a few countries have a handful of clinics that provide this form of treatment.

There are several steps to go through before being treated using their proton beam therapy. First, the patient must be diagnosed early. Second, the cancer must be small, only a few millimeters in size. "Currently, we treat almost all types of cancer – most commonly, pancreatic, stomach, prostate, and lung. Brain cancer

“
I WANT OUR
PATIENTS TO FEEL
AT EASE
”

is not [immediately] treatable using our method." Most recently, the facility introduced a piece of equipment worth ¥200 million that is able to use the proton beam therapy to treat breast cancer.

Third, the patient must apply for and receive a check-up at Medipolis. They don't accept National Health Insurance at the moment, but do "take all private health insurance – even international."

Work can begin after receiving full clearance. "Sometimes the patient's family comes down with them. Our facility doesn't have beds or rooms like in a hospital. Patients stay at Bay Terrace Hotel next door in their rooms, surrounded by friends or family." The location, Hishikawa proclaims, is prime resort land; the pride of Kagoshima, and perfect for those recovering from cancer. "We have the





• WE THE PEOPLE •

ARE GREATER THAN FEAR

WWW.EQUALHUMANITY.ORG

GO SEE SOMETHING GREAT

With exhibitions by Shepard Fairey and Yayoi Kusama now showing, plus a host of bands heading our way, you've got no excuse to hide out at home this month.



"Are Greater Than Fear" Shepard Fairey/Amplifier Foundation

SHEPARD FAIREY

Billed as the largest collection of pieces by the artist, this exhibition at The Grand Nikko Hotel's Gallery 21 hosts the works of street artist Shepard Fairey. The Los Angeles-based illustrator and founder of the OBEY brand is also known for his activism, having created the iconic "Hope" poster for Barack Obama's campaign in 2008, and most recently for his "We The People" series meant for public use during the protests arising around Donald Trump's inauguration.

Gallery 21 Until April 9
www.gallery21-daiba.com

THE ART WORLD

OUR PICK OF THE CITY'S BEST EXHIBITIONS

Compiled by Luca Eandi

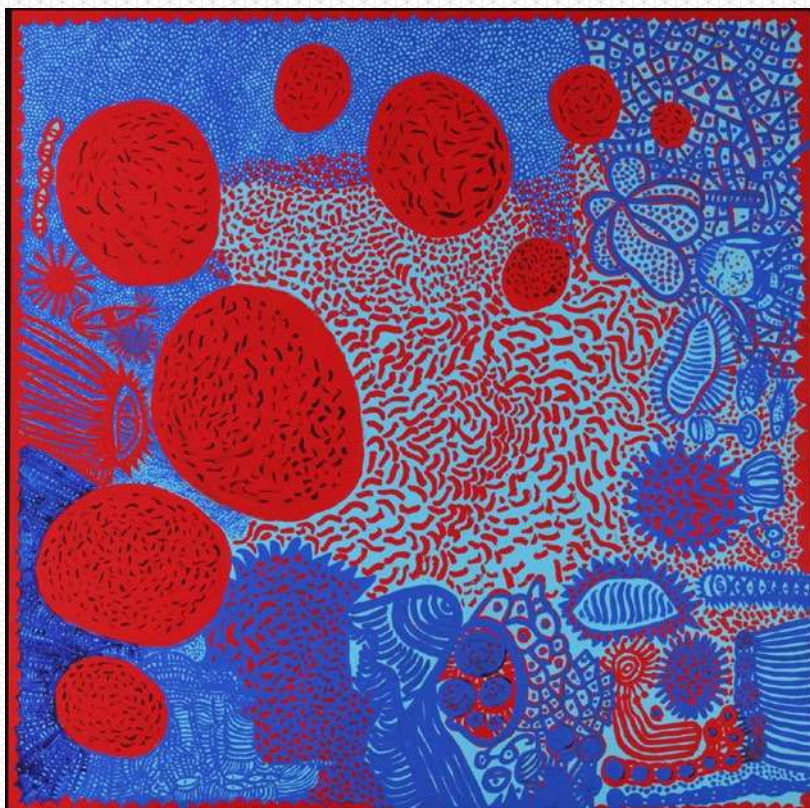


Henri Matisse, Still Life, 1896

ANIMALS ANIMALS ANIMALS

Animals – from the earliest depictions on cave walls, on through Egyptian bronze statues to Damien Hirst's formaldehyde-preserved sheep – are a constant artistic motif, present throughout the history of expression. This emphatically titled exhibit explores the myriads of techniques and materials used to craft works representing animals, from traditional artwork relying on heavy symbolism, to the more esoteric approach of contemporary artists.

The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo
 Until May 21 www.momat.go.jp



YAYOI KUSAMA: MY ETERNAL SOUL

Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama is as vibrant and inspired as ever, and considering she first tasted success in the early 1950s, her longevity and ability to stay relevant is nothing short of extraordinary. Now 87 years old and best known for her brightly colored pop art style, she returns to Tokyo with her biggest exhibition yet, titled "My Eternal Soul." Made up of large-scale paintings, this latest series, started in 2009, sits alongside works that go back seven decades. **The National Art Center, Tokyo** Until May 22 kusama2017.jp

PARODY AND INTERTEXTUALITY: VISUAL CULTURE IN JAPAN

AROUND THE 1970S

The 1970s were the tipping point for parody in Japan. Already used as a technique for social commentary and expression by artists since the 60s, the satirical device came into the mainstream in the 70s through its use on television, magazines and in pop culture. This exhibition shows the proliferation of parody through manga books, TV clips, advertisements and posters, highlighting the works of luminaries such as Genpei Akasegawa and Tadanori Yokoo, amongst others. **Tokyo Station Gallery** Until April 16 www.ejrcf.or.jp/gallery

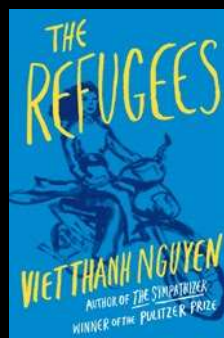


POP 1964



BOOKS

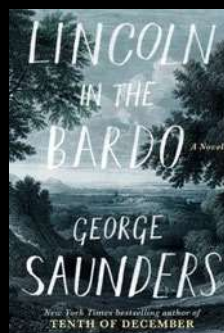
Three engaging books for
springtime park breaks



THE REFUGEES BY VIET THANH NGUYEN

The first release from Viet Thanh Nguyen since his Pulitzer-winning "The Sympathizer" in 2016. This one is a collection of short stories about immigration, chronicling

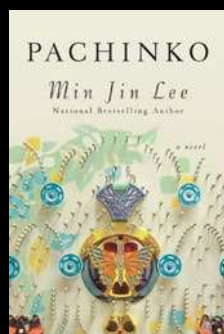
characters struggling to bridge the countries of their birth to their new homes. Nguyen nimbly explores the dynamics between families, couples and cultures that have differing aspirations and definitions of self-actualization.



LINCOLN IN THE BARDO BY GEORGE SAUNDERS

This new novel by acclaimed author George Saunders is a work of historical fiction, taking place on the night of Abraham Lincoln's son's burial, at the

dawn of the American Civil War. Exploring themes of grief and morality, this book is told through unconventional narrative devices, making it a truly unique literary experience that only Saunders could craft.

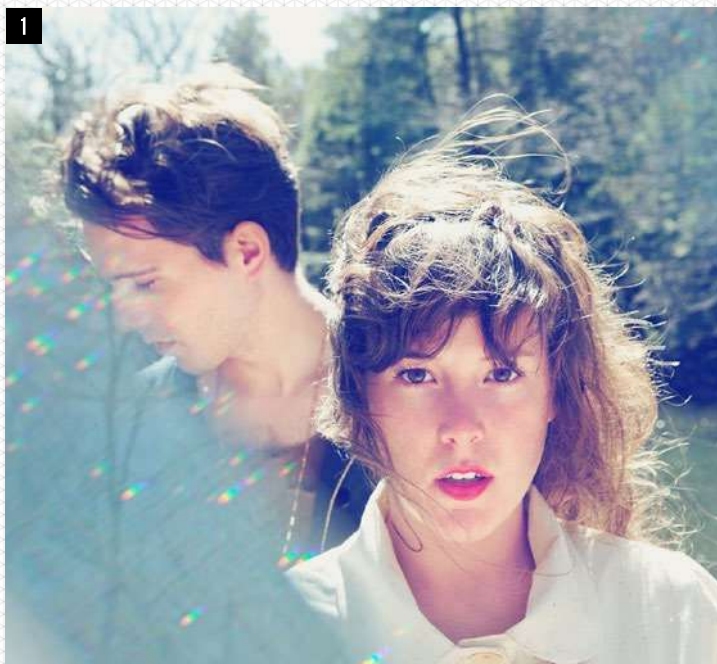


PACHINKO BY MIN JIN LEE

In this multi-generational epic novel, author Min Jin Lee tells the tale of a Korean family and their struggles set through nearly the whole 20th century – spanning from the Japanese

occupation, exile from their home and beyond. The story is sprawling and ambitious in scope, but the writing is tight enough to make it seem effortless to keep pace with the strife and hard-won triumphs of this exceptional family.

G@guide AGENDA



AGENDA: THE WEEKENDER ROUNDUP OF WHAT'S HAPPENING IN MARCH

1 MAR 6

PURITY RING

The Canadian duo comes to Tokyo for their first show in the capital, bringing along highly original, custom-made synth/percussion gear that doubles up as a light show.

Where: Womb

How much: ¥6,000

More info: www.alive.mu

2 MAR 1-31

KYOTARO: CLAD IN THE UNIVERSE

The Kyoto native's latest show deals in "clothes people will wear 100,000 years from now" and draws on anime as an influence in both style and content.

Where: Diesel Gallery

How much: Free

More info: www.diesel.co.jp/art

3 MAR 1

EXPLOSIONS IN THE SKY

The Texas instrumental post-rock band comes back to the Tokyo area for their first time since last summer's performance at Fuji Rock.

Where: Liquidroom Ebisu

How much: ¥6,500

More info: hsmash-jpn.com/live

4 MAR 23

THE SPECIALS

The seminal British ska band has been going since 1977, and this month brings their current reunion lineup for a handful of must-see dates in Japan.

Where: ZEPP Tokyo

How much: ¥9,000

More info: www.creativeman.co.jp

5 MAR 17-19

ART FAIR TOKYO 2017

In its 12th edition, this huge three-day show features work from 150 galleries, all offering access to both familiar and new works from the contemporary Japanese art scene.

Where: Tokyo International Forum

How much: ¥2,300

More info: www.artfairtokyo.com

6 MAR 4

TEENAGE FANCLUB

It's been a long seven years since this power-pop band played Japan, but the Scottish quintet is looking to break that streak this March. Their 10th album, "Here," was released in September 2016.

Where: EX Theatre Roppongi

How much: ¥7,000

More info: ynos.tv/hostessclub

7 MAR 3-5

YOKOHAMA BREAD FESTIVAL

More than 50 bakeries from far and wide bring their fresh baked goods to this very popular festival, which drew over 120,000 people last year.

Where: Yokohama Red Brick Warehouse

How much: Free

More info: pannofes.jp

8 MAR 25

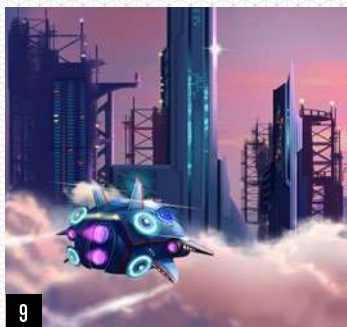
TOKYO GIRLS COLLECTION 2017

All the latest in trendy clothing, cosmetics, music and art – this popular event draws crowds and also features fashion shows, pageants and concerts.

Where: Yoyogi National Gymnasium

How much: ¥6,300

More info: girlswalker.com



9



10



11



12



AMERICAN STYLE
Big Cut
**TOMAHAWK
STEAK**
PREMIUM BONE-IN RIBEYE

Available for a limited time from March 6th to April 30th



Aussie Cobb Salad

A hearty salad of fresh mixed green salad, hard-boiled eggs, tomatoes, ham and cheese. Topped with crispy fried chicken goujons and served with your choice of dressing.

Available for a limited time from March 6th to April 30th



Roppongi 03-5413-4870	Shibuya 03-5459-7751	Shinagawa Takanawa 03-5798-3501
Shinagawa Konan 03-6718-2761	Ikebukuro 03-5928-1391	Ebina 046-292-4286
	Osaka Umeda 06-6457-7121	Makuhari 043-213-3256
		Nagoya Sakae 052-968-7800

www.outbacksteakhouse.co.jp/en

9 MAR 10-13

TOKYO ANIME AWARD FESTIVAL 2017

The fourth edition of this international animation festival seeks to highlight outstanding work in both the feature-length and short categories.

Where: Shin-Bungeiza

How Much: ¥1,000

More info: animefestival.jp

10 MAR 1-11

KOISHIKAWA KORAKUEN PLUM BLOSSOM VIEWING

Can't wait for sakura season? Take in the beauty of the plum blossom within one of Tokyo's oldest and most beautiful gardens.

Where: Koishikawa Korakuen

How much: ¥300

More info: teien.tokyo-park.or.jp

11 MAR 1-17

NEW-WAVE ARTISTS 2017

An exhibition introducing five promising, up-and-coming artists selected from among the participants of the "Best Selection 2016" exhibition.

Where: Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum

How much: ¥500

More info: www.tobikan.jp

12 MAR 18-19

I LOVE IRELAND FESTIVAL & ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE

Asia's largest St. Patrick's Day Parade is in its 25th year of bringing merriment and Irish love from Omotesando all the way to Yoyogi Park.

Where: Yoyogi Park

How much: Free

More info: www.facebook.com/iloveireland.japan



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ROBERT WALTERS

SIX STEPS TO HANAMI SUCCESS

How to impress your Japanese co-workers during a cherry blossom nomikai (drinking party)? Besides snapping countless photos of the flowers, here are a few tips for successfully mixing business with pleasure in Japan

1

DON'T DRINK BEFORE "KAMPAI"

No matter how much you're longing for a sip of that beer, it's considered rude to start drinking before the organizer shouts "kampai," which translates as "dry the glass" but essentially means "bottoms up."

2

GO LOW

Do get into the spirit of hearty kampai-ing, but don't get caught holding your glass up too high when clinking. The rule of thumb is to always hold your glass lower than your boss's (or any elder's), which will explain why everyone seems to cheers low rather than high. Bonus tip: the same rule applies when bowing – you should always bow lower than your superior.

3

POUR AND BE POURED FOR

It's impolite to refill your own drink, so what do you do when you need a top up? Simply make sure your co-workers glasses are full and they'll return the favor. Be sure to keep this up as the party progresses – there should never be an empty glass in sight.



4

WATCH YOUR HANDS

When someone reaches over to pour you a drink, pick up your glass with both hands, resting one hand underneath and the other on the side. Also, when pouring for others, be sure to cradle the bottle with both hands, label facing upwards.

5

CHOOSE YOUR SEAT WISELY

If you are the newest or youngest employee in the company, be sure to nab a seat close to your boss (so you can take orders), with easy exit access (in case fulfilling said orders necessitates moving around frequently).

6

DON'T LEAVE WITHOUT CLAPPING

It's customary to end off a party with a bit of ceremonial hand clapping. The organizer will announce when the moment has arrived, after which everyone stands for ippon-jime, which refers to the pattern of clapping: three sets of three claps and one final clap. Afterwards, you're free to call it a night, or hang around for the after-nomikai...



WANT TO LEARN JAPANESE?

Would you like to finally be able to speak Japanese? Are cross cultural misunderstandings holding you back in business and your personal life in Japan? If so, find out how Japan Management & Communication (JM&C) can help you achieve your personal, business and language goals through our personalized training programs. For more information on our courses please visit jmctokyo.com/japanese/



Contact → Tel: 03 5423 0531 | **Address:** Hasebe No.2 Bldg, 2F, 5-21-2 Hiroo, Shibuya Ku | **Email:** jmc@jconcept.co.jp

People, Parties, Places

TOKYO'S LONGEST RUNNING SOCIETY PAGE WITH BILL HERSEY

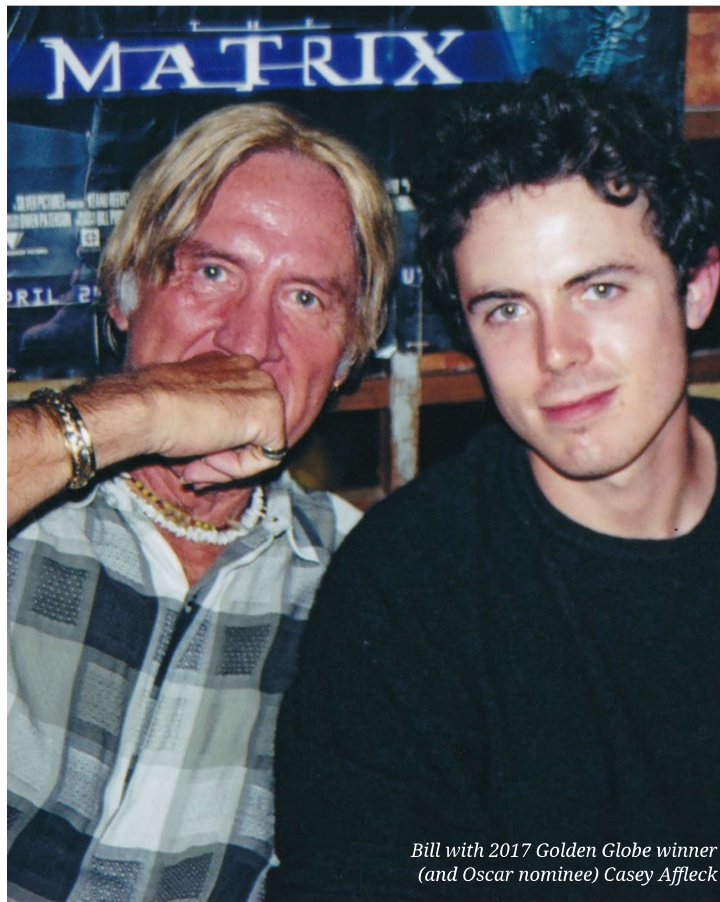
Knocking out this month's column at my favorite convenience store – a 7-Eleven just by my house. I've actually shopped here for several years, and am treated royally by the staff who I've gotten to know and become friends with. The coffee's great and there are several counters where you can sit and work. Students and young salarymen/women who probably live with others in small apartments in the neighborhood use these facilities to relax, study, and eat. The variety of food and household items is amazing, and always seems to be growing. They also have a big selection of magazines you can browse through. Most 7-Elevens sell English newspapers, as well as the office basics (pens, tablets, fax paper, and more). I know I shouldn't eat a lot of junk food, but I love dark chocolate and ice cream, and I often end up eating things I shouldn't. They seem to have all kinds of new goodies every time I go there.

I'm also a good customer of the Natural Lawson Store in Tomigaya. During my stay at the Saiseikai Hospital a few years ago, Takeshi Niinami, who was then CEO of the ever-growing Lawson chain, sent me boxes of their different health breads. The hospital food wasn't that bad, but the Lawson variety of delicious and healthy baked goods really helped. I'm sure there's a Lawson's somewhere near you. I buy my chia seeds and goji berries for healthy drinks at one near my apartment. I just saw in a TV report that Lawson's plans on opening 500 stores in the Philippines in the not-too-distant future. Of course, I'm happy that the Filipino people will hopefully be able to take advantage of this, but I am a little concerned about what all the families who run the sari-sari stores (local neighborhood convenience stores) all over the islands will do. My friend who ran Lawson's is now a VIP at Suntory. Like many other companies, they're getting more and more into medicines and health cures – watch some of the many commercials on TV and you'll see what I mean.

I'm sure most of you have been to and shopped at National Azabu Supermarket in Hiroo. The store owner Banjiro Uemura, his company

store manager Dale Toriumi, and the always helpful staff have gone all out to make National Azabu the place to shop for food and drink from all around the world. Keeping up with world trends, the store places a lot of emphasis on local and international foods that are often difficult to find here, and with all of the choices, it's hard not to walk out of the place with a full shopping bag.

On the subject of shopping, I want to let you know about a great opportunity. Thanks to the many generous friends I've had throughout my life, I've been able to travel much of this globe of ours – and as an anthropology major, it has meant the world to me. I've met so many wonderful people, had so many unusual and exciting adventures, and thanks to my packrat personality, I've bought so many interesting things, but frankly tend to forget I even have them. If you've been to my house, you'll know it's like a museum. Of course, I'll keep my favorites, but I decided to do some early spring cleaning and sell some of what I really don't need any more. I've got furniture from China, Korea, and the Philippines, a saddle from Saudi Arabia, a huge carved wooden Indian chief, paintings and posters from around the world, and so much more. If you'd like to drop by to have a look, give me a call at 03-3485-2803 or 090-3200-6767. Anyway! Let's move on to Tokyo's ever-busy events scene.



Bill with 2017 Golden Globe winner (and Oscar nominee) Casey Affleck

PAKISTAN AMBASSADOR AMIL'S YEAR-END DINNER

I celebrated New Year's a bit early at a really special sit-down dinner hosted by Pakistani Ambassador Farukh Amil. I had been to a couple of barbecues on the embassy's patio, but this was the first time for me to party in his beautiful sixth floor residence in Pakistan's big modern embassy/residence in Minato-ku.

I loved the art in his spacious apartment and the great view of Tokyo. I was especially impressed with two mirrored, life-size statues of jaguars at the entrance. They were decorated with red lights for the holidays and were really beautiful. There were lots of interesting paintings everywhere and many wonderful photos of the ambassador with

NICK MASEE'S CHARITY BLAST

1. Todd Olson, John Duley, Kjell Yadon and Richard Ragains
2. Barbara Hancock, Scott Hancock, Alison Espley, Hitomi Hayashi, Barry Bergmann
3. Clara Bodin, Nick Masee
4. Ludelia Nelias, Vincent Nelias, Toshiaki Yokozawa, Evan Will, Clara Bodin, Chloe Queval, Hitomi Yokozawa and Rie Hibino
5. Some of the party crowd



EU WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

6. Head of the European Leadership Centre, Danica Purg
7. Minister Katsunobu Kato and EU Amb. Viorel Isticioaia-Budura
8. Finnish Parliament Member Sari Raassina
9. Hitotsubashi University's Jesper Edman
10. Former Greek Amb. Mara Marinaki
11. Former Danish Minister of Parliament Astrid Krag



PAKISTAN EMBASSY PARTY

1. Romanian Amb. Svetlana-Tatiana Iosiper, Ecuadorian Amb. Leonardo Carrion
2. Edward Iosiper, Romanian Amb. Svetlana-Tatiana Iosiper
3. Jamaican Amb. Ricardo Allcock, Suzanne Allcock
4. Algerian Amb. Mohamed El Amine Bencherif, Pakistani Amb. Farukh Amil, Kuwaiti Amb. Abdul-Rahman Al-Otaibi, Venezuelan Amb. Seiko Ishikawa
5. Pamela Berkowsky, Zara-Rose Shapiro, Momoe Fritz (Micronesia), Kumiko Meric (Turkey)
6. Farukh Amil, Leonardo Carrion, Edward Iosiper, Bulent Meric
7. Ana Lucia Posada (Colombia), Myrtha D'Angelo
8. Farukh Amil, Gul Qaiser Sarwani (Pakistan), Jason Varney (South Africa)
9. Amparo Menendez (Ecuador), Mohamed Bencharif

his family and friends over the course of his exciting career. Guests were a very international mix that included a family the ambassador knows from Miami, several ambassadors I've known for some time, many younger embassy staffers whom I met for the first time, and plenty of long-time mutual friends from the worlds of fashion, arts, and more.

The dinner of many delicious courses of Pakistani specialties was excellent. It was a perfect way to end the old year, and like most of the people there, I stayed on well past the time the party was scheduled to end. I had a fascinating chat with our host about his country. I have some great memories of my visit there for a mountain tourism seminar. The show that the military men with their long mustaches and swords put on at an outside barbecue was one of the most dynamic performances I've ever seen. Pakistan is a beautiful country and I met a lot of nice people there. I pray that their people, like people all around today's world, get their problems settled and start having the tourism they deserve.

NICK MASEE'S BIG CHARITY BLAST

Nick Masee, who's head of Asian Tigers in Japan, is also one of our city's most generous philanthropists. In addition to making his moving company one of the most professional and popular companies for VIPs moving from Tokyo to any place in the world or vice versa, he spends a lot of time helping many worthwhile causes, which include the YMCA and many others. One of his most successful fundraisers is his annual barbecue in his penthouse on Yamate-dori.

I was really sorry I had to miss his most recent buffet, featuring a great view of the fireworks, and a lot of laid-back fun. From all reports, it was packed with interesting people enjoying delicious food, and a warm ambiance.

Hopefully none of you have to move, but in case you do I strongly recommend Asian Tigers. They really know their business.

EUROPEAN UNION SPECIAL CONFERENCE AT ANA HOTEL

I had planned on going to the European Union's first high-level conference in Japan on gender equality and the economic empowerment of women, but an interesting and paying opportunity to show some showbiz friends around Tokyo came up, so unfortunately I had to cancel going to the conference. But I heard that more than 300 people attended the conference and reception at the ANA Hotel. Congratulations to EU Ambassador Viorel Isticioaia-Budura, his staff, and those who worked so hard in making it the big success it was.

FAMILIAR FACES

It was a pleasant surprise to run into former Weekender publisher Ray Pedersen at TAC. Ray and his family are living

in Canada now and he has a busy recruiting company, to go along with many other projects there. He looks good and loves living in Canada. Ray sends his best to his many friends here.

Xavier Destribats, the top hotel manager for the Kempinski chain, wasn't in town to join us, as he is in Cuba. It's a place I'd love to visit. He managed several hotels here and there, and as you probably know, he was GM of the popular Grand Hyatt for several years. I miss him and his wife Tatiana; she used to give me box after box of her kids' hand-me-downs to send to less fortunate kids in the Philippines.

Australian car dealer Mick Lay was back in town for a few weeks. He spends much of his time in Australia now working in real estate with his brother. Mick still has his car company here, and has a really helpful guy named Luke taking care of new and used car sales, car servicing, registration, shaken renewals and repairs.

I felt Toyota was way ahead when they made the Soarer sports model. I love the car with its red leather upholstery, the convertible top, and its powerful engine, but I have to admit I felt a little bashful when I'd park it – with its dents, scratches, and taped-up fender – at the Grand Hyatt, Ritz Carlton, ANA Intercontinental and Hilton alongside all those Bentleys, Rolls-Royces, Porsches, and Lamborghinis. I asked Luke for help and he did a super job of repairing all the things that needed fixing. The car is 16 years old, and really looks and runs great. My thanks to Mick and Luke, who made this all possible. If you need their help, call 03-3468-0804 for their door-to-door service.

REST IN PEACE, KIKUKO

We lost another legendary lady when publishing pioneer Kikuko Ireton passed away on January 26. Kikuko married an American, Glenn Ireton, who was working for the Supreme Command of the Allied Powers during the Occupation from 1945 to 1952. In 1953, they started an English-language trade paper that covered the regional motion picture business. Later known as *Movie/TV Marketing*, the publication was highly regarded for introducing Japanese films at major international film festivals and served as a liaison between the Japanese and international film worlds. It was published for 50 years.

In her later years, Kikuko continued to consult for Japan film companies. I had the great privilege of really getting to know her as a friend and co-worker. I have lots of wonderful memories of putting together the daily paper for the first 10 years of the Tokyo Film Festival with her and her daughter Asia. It wasn't all work, as I enjoyed spending time with her and her family in Hawaii for many years. I also want to mention she was always a fashion icon and really understood original, fun, and always beautifully chic fashion. She'll really be missed.

**In &
Around**



Shinsei Bank top executive Sanjeev Gupta and his wife Rashmi at TAC



The Art Foundation's Joni Waka, national staffer Atome Kambu and Joni's dog Bogie at Azabu National Supermarket



The dearly departed Kikuko Ireton

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Explore Japan on weekend Y tours

Tokyo Musashino YMCA has fascinating slate of adventures

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING TO BRIGHTEN your weekends this fall? If you like exploring and being in the company of friendly and like-minded people, perhaps a field trip sponsored by the Tokyo Musashino YMCA is just for you. The trips are led by knowledgeable and entertaining people—people who enjoy sharing what they know about Japan with others. Participation is usually limited to 15 people per trip to allow everyone to get to know one another. All trips are conducted in English.

In the past year, field trip participants have stayed overnight in a Buddhist temple and observed the nocturnal *musasabi* or flying

squirrels. On another outing members got to dig into Japan's past during a hands-on archaeological excavation in Tokyo. Not only did they find muscels that they rarely used, but also Jōmon Period artifacts dating back between 1000 and 2000 B.C.

Tokyo Bay was the setting for an ecological study of a tidal flat. With shovels and buckets, our participants collected marine animals and learned about their function in purifying the water.

If digging out in the open is not your kind of experience, the program has offered a pottery tour to Mashiko where everyone made their own pots and a *saké* brewery tour at one of Tokyo's oldest family breweries. Not only did members learn how *saké* was made, but also they were able to taste test various kinds of *saké*.

The Tokyo Musashino YMCA field trip program is designed to enable people to learn about Japan's cultural and physical environments. Having someone "in the know" guiding a small group makes for a very pleasurable experience. **JOIN US THIS FALL** when a new schedule of field trips will be offered. For information about this program—or if you are interested in leading a field trip, please call Mark Slater at the Tokyo Musashino YMCA, (0422) 53-5151. **Read related story on Page 4.**



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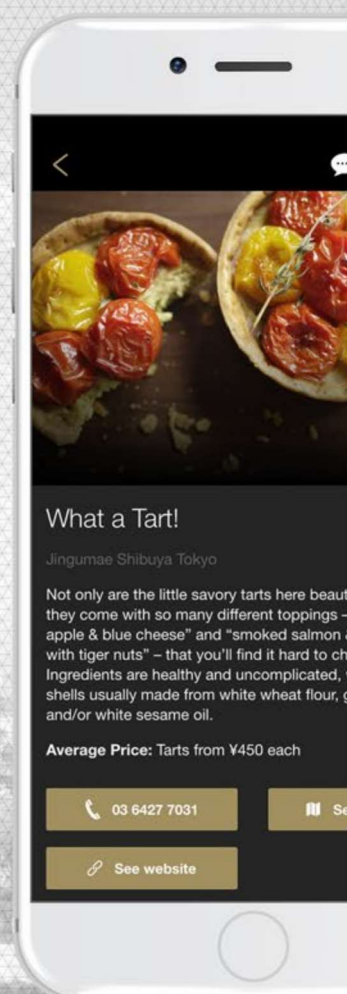
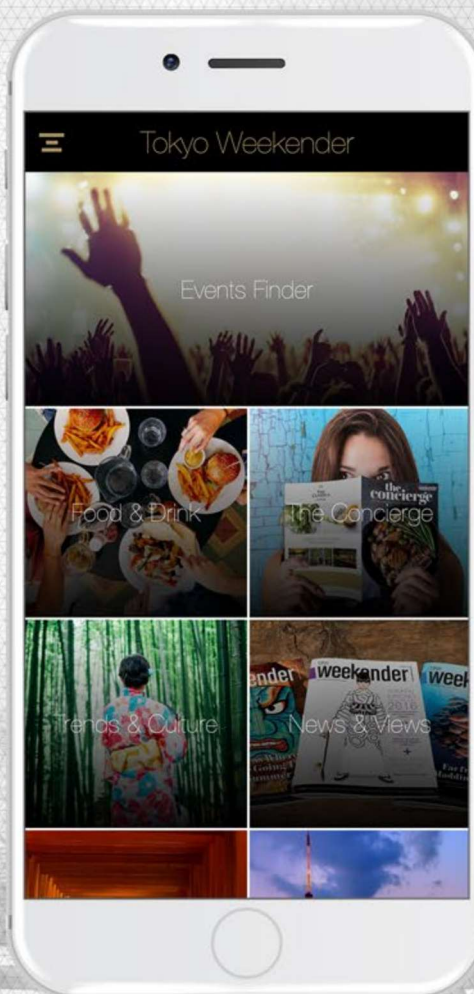
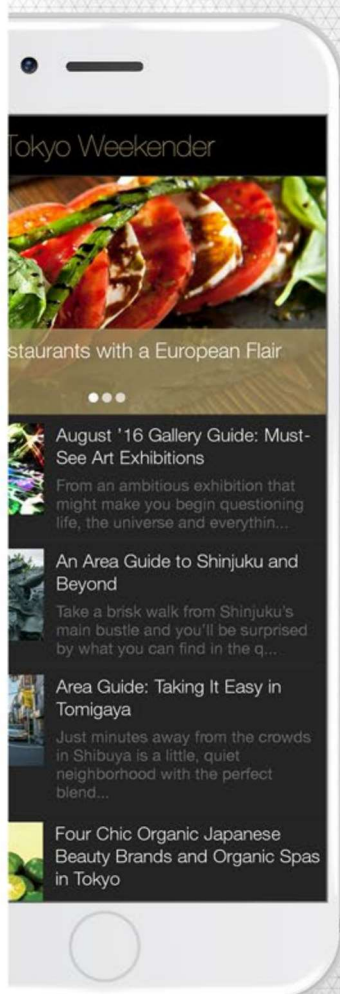
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